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INCREASE IN COVID VACCINES FOR GPs WELCOME

Today’s increase in the allocation of COVID-19 vaccines to general practice will come just in time for GPs to begin vaccinating anyone 50 years and over later this month, AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said.

“This increase means about 4000 general practices currently getting between 50 and 100 doses per week will be eligible to receive an extra 100 doses each week, which will help improve access for patients,” Dr Khorshid said.

“Supply constraints have meant that most general practices have only been able to offer a small number of doses each week to patients, and many have long waiting lists.

“GPs have delivered more than 1.2 million COVID-19 vaccinations and have helped to significantly increase vaccination rates since being progressively brought into the vaccine rollout from late March.

“More than half of all COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered by GPs, who are now the backbone of Australia’s COVID-19 vaccination program.

“GPs are administering the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is proving to be a very safe and very effective vaccine that is being used in 139 countries around the world.

“It is important for people to be able to discuss the benefits and risks of vaccination, including any concerns they may have about the very rare instances of blood clots, and GPs are there to help patients to make well-informed decisions about whether or not they should be vaccinated.

“When supply improves, general practice will be able to take even more COVID-19 vaccines, having a demonstrated history of being able to vaccinate patients on a very significant scale.

“Last year’s influenza vaccine program was announced on 1 April and by the end of that month GPs had already delivered over three million vaccines, despite operating in lockdown conditions.

“Winter is coming and while Australia doing very well to keep COVID-19 out of the community, the situation around the world is a stark reminder of the devastating impact that COVID-19 outbreaks can have.

“This is no time for complacency and the AMA is encouraging eligible people to come forward and get vaccinated, particularly those who are more vulnerable to COVID-19.”

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