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AMA wants nationally-consistent mandatory COVID vaccination for all healthcare staff

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) calls on National Cabinet to act urgently on nationally-consistent public health orders for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for all healthcare workers, including GPs.

AMA President Omar Khorshid said legal protection should also be given to healthcare employers who mandate vaccinations for all their staff.

“Most health care providers in Australia are small businesses that don’t have the time or resources needed to navigate complex work health and safety laws. We need to make it easier for them to be able to mandate vaccination, which is the best way to protect their staff and patients.”

The AMA welcomed reports today that Victoria will soon follow New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and Queensland and make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for healthcare workers, and also include GP and medical clinic staff in those mandates.

Dr Khorshid said this was a critical step, as other state public health orders did not necessarily cover all staff across state and territory health sectors – GPs were not included in some state directives for mandatory vaccination.

Dr Khorshid said the Federal Government needed to co-ordinate States and Territories through the National Cabinet to ensure a nationally-consistent approach to mandatory vaccination that included everyone – GPs and practice staff, pharmacists, hospital staff, ambulance staff, cooks and cleaners - leaving no exemptions, except for legitimate medical reasons.

“I am confident that most healthcare workers faced with a very clear message from employers and government that they must get vaccinated will go and do the right thing – it’s the right thing by their patients because it is not fair for a sick patient to be potentially exposed to COVID because staff refused to do the right thing,” he said.

“The public has an expectation that if they go to a doctor they will be safe and that staff will have been vaccinated.

“Nationally-consistent public health orders would provide legal protection to any employer who could reasonably establish work safety would benefit from a workplace vaccine mandate.

“It’s important for GPs and other small businesses to have government backing and protection when it comes to mandating vaccines for all employees.”

15 September 2021

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