
**Advisory Committee on Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People
with Disability**
Fifth Meeting: 29 April 2020
Key Outcomes

The Department advised members of the Advisory Committee that the short-form easy read version of the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability (the Plan) will soon be published online at www.health.gov.au. The Department also advised that a range of communication materials were currently in development for people with disability, including for congregate settings. The Department again thanked the Advisory Committee for its tremendous contribution and assistance in progressing key actions within the Plan.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the positive announcement by the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP on 28 April 2020, setting aside an additional 500,000 masks for the disability sector.

At the request of the Advisory Committee, the Department invited representatives from state and territory governments to attend the meeting. Each state and territory provided an update on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- the development of state-based COVID-19 guidance for congregate settings, prisons and for law enforcement;
- protocols for hospital settings; and
- community visitors programs.

The Advisory Committee discussed a range of topics including, but not limited to:

- acknowledgement of the considerable work taking place across jurisdictions in assisting people with disability and their families;
- the importance of sharing information between jurisdictions and where possible, aligning to ensure consistency between states as well as the Commonwealth;
- how to manage the risks for people with disability in congregate settings including inconsistent visitor protocols and the need to escalate guidance for these settings;
- the positive feedback provided by people with disability regarding access to telehealth services;
- the need for overarching guidance for hospital settings on the admission of people with disability and their rights to equitable health care;
- the importance of accessing the flu vaccine for people with disability who are at high risk and for their carers;
- the mechanisms to provide support and advice to health professionals to assist them in improving their care of patients with disability;
- the importance of COVID-19 surveillance data for people with disability.

Dr Ben Gauntlett, Disability Discrimination Commissioner, presented the proposed structure for a draft Human Rights Framework (*Protecting the rights of people with disability: Guidelines on human rights-based decision making in the context of COVID-19*) for consideration by members.

NEXT STEPS

- The Advisory Committee will continue to meet weekly.
- Representatives from all states and territories will be invited to attend the Advisory Committee meetings on an ongoing basis.

- The Department of Health will continue to progress the Communication Strategy, the Evaluation Framework and explore opportunities for COVID-19 surveillance data for people with disability, in addition to data collected by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- The Department of Health will review suggested amendments to the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability, and will consider publication timing for the next iteration of the Plan.
- The Advisory Committee members will provide comments out of session on the proposed structure for a Human Rights Framework.
- Urgent work will continue on the communication materials including the development of a disability-specific webpage on the Department of Health Website.