



MEDIA RELEASE
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AMA Qld and ASMOFQ back mandatory vaccination as deadline arrives

AMA Queensland and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland (ASMOFQ) have backed the ban on unvaccinated employees in public hospitals, which comes into force today, saying it's necessary to protect patients and staff and will potentially save lives.

The State Government has mandated that all public hospital employees must now be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to continue working in the sector.

AMA Queensland President Professor Chris Perry said the decision was in the interests of patient, staff and community safety, and even more critical as Queensland will begin to welcome interstate travellers from COVID hotspots later this year.

"We know the number of cases in Queensland will increase as people begin to move around the country more freely and we've witnessed Delta outbreaks in hospitals elsewhere this year," Prof Perry said.

"The outcome can be devastating and we need to do everything we can to avoid something similar occurring here.

"Patient and staff safety must be the first priority and we were supportive of the decision to mandate vaccination for public hospital employees from the outset.

"Indeed, we would like to see the public health order extended to cover all health care employees, including those in private practice, which continues to be a grey area that leaves workers, employers and patients exposed."

Prof Perry said he expected today's deadline would impact a very small number of medical staff, pointing to the results of an online survey of AMA Queensland members undertaken in conjunction with ASMOFQ two months ago.

"At that time almost 97 per cent of respondents were already partially or fully vaccinated, and almost 90 per cent of the remainder planned to have the vaccine," he said.

"In addition, 90 per cent of respondents were in support of mandatory vaccination for all health care workers and almost 80 per cent were concerned about working alongside unvaccinated workers.

"Everyone who can be vaccinated should be vaccinated to protect those who can't, not only in the health care sector but right across the community."

ASMOFQ President Dr Hau Tan said mandatory vaccinations for public health care workers would ensure hospitals could continue to function and was essential for the safety of staff and patients.



“The impact on hospital rosters and service delivery when staff become ill or have to isolate is significant and we cannot afford to put more pressure on the hospital system,” Dr Tan said.

“We saw that a few months ago when about 400 doctors and other health care workers and their families were forced to quarantine in South East Queensland during an outbreak.

“Mandatory vaccination, along with the supply of appropriate PPE and proper fit-testing are critical to minimise the spread of COVID-19 throughout hospitals and the wider community.

“We understand that current public hospital staff who cannot be vaccinated for health reasons are likely to be redeployed to other roles within Queensland Health.”

Dr Maria Boulton, the AMA Queensland Council of General Practice Chair, called on the State Government to issue public health orders to also cover the private health care sector to protect employers and their staff, both from COVID and from legal repercussions.

Dr Boulton said strong government leadership was needed to support individual employers such as GPs and other private practice specialists, who need to mandate COVID vaccinations in their workplaces.

“We have been calling for this for months and it is taking way too long,” she said.

“It is complex for small employers like GPs to meet the legalities required to mandate vaccinations for their employees.

“We need clear guidelines from government to protect every worker in our health system so we can continue to safely deliver primary health care in community.”

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