

Doctors warn against Russian roulette with vaccine

Patient safety must take priority over convenience when it comes to delivering the COVID-19 vaccines, according to Queensland's peak medical group.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Professor Chris Perry said General Practices were the safest and most sensible locations for vaccine delivery.

"A new vaccine is likely to involve a two-dose regimen over a few weeks, and use multi-dose vials, which requires more skill and training than is available at a shopping centre pharmacy," Prof. Perry said.

"GPs also understand their patients' individual health histories and can respond quickly in the unlikely event of an adverse reaction."

Prof. Perry said fostering trust was essential to safeguarding the community.

"These vaccines are very new and many people will feel nervous about taking something that has been developed relatively quickly," he said.

"To encourage maximum uptake, we need to be abundantly cautious and provide vaccinations in a medically supervised environment.

"Naturally, priority will be given to front-line workers and vulnerable groups but it will take some time to find out how effective the vaccines are in reducing the severity of the coronavirus infection.

"In the meantime, we must continue social distancing, which is why it is regrettable that the Queensland Government is putting people at risk of infection by trialing COVID-testing in several pharmacies."

AMA Queensland has previously warned against COVID testing in retail outlets because of the risk of cross-infection among shoppers.

"We already have specific testing locations which are fully equipped with trained staff and adequate PPE," Prof. Perry said.

"Rather than testing in busy pharmacies, which people will want to avoid entering, we should boost existing testing services to ensure that frontline health workers and the wider community remain safe."

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