



Australian Government

Department of Health

Residential Aged Care Facility Media Support Kit

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

19 February 2021

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout will attract significant media attention. It is anticipated that residential aged care facilities (RACFs) may be approached by media in their local area to participate in media and publicity opportunities.

This information has been prepared to support RACFs to respond to and engage with media, if they choose to do so.

Choosing to interact with the media is at the complete discretion of each RACF. RACFs do not need to engage with media if they do not want to.

This media support kit includes:

- **Media protocols** which outline when a media enquiry, opportunity or interaction should be referred to the Department of Health's Media Team for response, and when a RACF can engage with and take lead on a media opportunity themselves.
- **Key messages** to help RACFs that choose to engage with media.
- **Tips for managing challenging situations** to support RACFs to navigate potential tricky interactions with media.

Contact for further support

If a RACF has any concerns about engaging with the media they may get in contact with the Department of Health's Media Team via news@health.gov.au

MEDIA PROTOCOLS

For external partners and Aged care providers

This information outlines when a media enquiry, opportunity or interaction should be referred to the Department of Health's Media Team for response and management. It also outlines when a RACF can engage with and take lead on a media opportunity themselves.

Media Engagement

The Commonwealth Government is responsible for coordinated communication across all parts of the COVID-19 vaccination rollout. This is important to ensure consistent, timely, transparent and credible information to inform and educate the Australian public.

All external partners and Aged care providers play an important role—first and foremost in their contribution to the successful rollout of Australia's COVID-19 vaccine, but also in the dissemination and promotion of public messaging and information.

There is likely to be media interest at a local level in the delivery of the first round of vaccinations under the Phase 1A rollout, which includes RACFs residents and workers.

RACFs should be prepared to receive enquiries from local media, including requests from news crews to attend the facility to cover the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Promoting the COVID-19 vaccination rollout

RACFs are encouraged, where they are comfortable and view it as appropriate, to promote the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine within their facility or respond to media enquiries.

Key messages have been provided, to support RACFs in these efforts.

Do I need to seek approval from the Department of Health to engage with the local media?

No. We have provided this document and other material to support your endeavours.

However, if you have communication or media enquiries relating to the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, please contact the department's media unit: news@health.gov.au; (02) 6289 7400, 0466 533 960.

How best to proactively engage with local media

RACFs may also wish to alert local media about the delivery of the first COVID-19 vaccinations. If you are considering contacting local media to promote the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine, please consider the need to:

- Clearly communicate conditions for access (see below)
- Escort any media into and out of the facility, ensure they only photograph residents, staff and families who have provided consent (see below)
- Clearly communicate where photos/footage can/can't be taken

- Ensure media attendance does not compromise the ability of the RACF to ensure appropriate physical distancing
- Ensure attending media are made aware of any jurisdictional requirements for the use of PPE, in particular, the wearing of face masks
- Ensure media do not approach any residents for interview, comment, photography or filming unless they have given their consent to speak to media in advance
- Provide media with at least 24 hours' notice.

Should providers allow the media in to film or photograph, the distribution of vaccines?

It is critically important you follow all relevant guidelines and jurisdictional directions in providing access to a RACF. If visitations are permitted, RACFs should also ensure the following prior to granting media access to the facility. This includes:

Consent

- Ensuring you have written consent from any person who will be identified in any media coverage, including residents, their families and workers
- If the decision for a resident would usually be made by a substitute decision-maker, you need to seek their consent

Staying COVIDSafe

- Ensuring that you follow the relevant health guidance on staying COVIDSafe within your facility, including social distancing, hand hygiene and wearing masks
- Ensuring any visitors comply with directions given by RACF staff

Visitation arrangements

- Ensuring that visitor access is consistent with the latest directions on visitor access or restrictions to RACFs.
- This can be done by visiting the [Department of Health website](#) and following the link to each state (noting that this may include a requirement for a flu vaccine).

How to contact us

For all communication and media enquiries relating to the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, please contact the department's media unit: news@health.gov.au; (02) 6289 7400, 0466 533 960

KEY MESSAGES

The Australian Government has prioritised residential aged care facility workers and residents in Phase 1A of the national COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

Residential aged care facility workers and residents are among the first people in Australia to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccines will be available to residents in aged care facilities across Australia from 22 February 2021.

The national COVID-19 vaccine rollout will begin with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, and will include the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine from March.

Staff in residential aged care facilities have supported residents—and their families, carers or substitute decision maker—to make an informed decision about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Clinical staff at residential aged care facilities have checked the health of each resident to make sure it is suitable for each person to receive the vaccine. Where appropriate, advice has been sought from GPs and other health professionals.

The Australian Government has recruited a clinical workforce who have been trained to administer vaccines to residents.

In addition to receiving COVID-19 vaccines, facilities will continue COVIDSafe practices such as social distancing, hand hygiene and wearing masks when required.

Where to find more information

More information, including translated information, is available on the Department of Health's website at health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines

People can also call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.

TIPS FOR MANAGING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS WITH MEDIA

Sometimes the presence of media can be unsettling for workers and residents, or tricky to navigate and manage. This information is provided to help RACFs manage potential tricky interactions involving media.

If media attend your facility without notifying you beforehand, it is important to remember:

- Media can position themselves on public land outside your facility. They cannot enter your facility unless they are invited.
- You can choose whether or not you want to invite media into your facility.

If you choose to invite media inside your facility, it is important to remember:

- All visitors to RACFs must abide by visitor guidelines and restrictions in place at RACFs. These may vary in each State and Territory, and you should keep up to date with your local health authority advice.
- Privacy of your workers and residents is important. Be sure to get clear permission from every person who the media may film, record, photograph or interview before media approach anyone in your facility.

If you choose to take part in a media opportunity, it is important that before they arrive you:

- Ask the media what they would like to report on, who they would like to interview, and what questions they would like to ask.
- Think about your answers to the questions they will be asking.
- Understand which topics you can confidently speak about, and which topics require someone different—like a medical expert—to answer.

If media attend your facility and you are uncomfortable with the situation, you should:

- Let them know if their presence is having a negative impact on workers, residents or visitors at your facility.
- Let them know if they do not have permission to film certain people or premises.
- Ask them to leave, or move to a different location.
- Follow your normal security processes if you are concerned for the safety of yourself or someone in your facility.
- Report any situation you are uncomfortable with to the Department of Health's Media Team by emailing news@health.gov.au