



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health and Aged Care**



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**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

Dear aged care providers

With winter upon us and COVID-19 continuing to circulate in the community, the risk of serious illness for vulnerable people, especially those receiving aged care, significantly increases. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to COVIDSafe behaviours and continued efforts to encourage and facilitate residents, care recipients and workers to get the 2023 COVID-19 booster dose.

Currently, just over half of eligible aged care residents have received a booster dose. This level of coverage is far lower than desirable. We are seeking your support in ensuring vaccination rates continue to improve, particularly where uptake is low.

We know that COVID-19 has a more severe impact on older people, including those living in residential aged care homes, and that a significant proportion of all deaths associated with COVID-19 occur in people over 80 years. The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) recently published research clearly demonstrating the advantages of COVID-19 vaccinations for aged care residents.

Aged care residents who receive a COVID-19 booster have their chances of death from COVID-19 reduced by as much as 93% at three months post vaccination, compared to those who were unvaccinated. This risk is still reduced by more than 50% after six months. Furthermore, for every 157 aged care residents who received a booster dose between June and November 2022, one death from COVID-19 was avoided. For this reason, it is crucial that eligible residents have every opportunity to receive a 2023 COVID-19 booster dose as soon as possible.

Providers and families of older people have a key role to play in encouraging and arranging access to the 2023 COVID-19 booster for residents. If residents, care recipients or their family members have concerns about booster vaccinations, it is helpful to discuss this early and encourage them to talk to their doctor or other health care professional about the benefits and risks of vaccination.

We understand that most aged care providers are successfully working with primary care providers to book vaccination clinics. However, if you need further assistance, please contact your PHN, or the Department at [racfvaccineclinics@health.gov.au](mailto:racfvaccineclinics@health.gov.au). There is no minimum number of residents needed for a clinic to take place and primary care providers are encouraged to administer the 2023 COVID-19 booster dose even if the number of eligible residents is small.

The best protection against COVID-19 and influenza this winter is to be vaccinated for both. Although they are separate vaccinations, it is clinically safe and administratively efficient for eligible residents to be vaccinated for both on the same day.

Thank you for your continued commitment to keeping residents, care recipients and staff protected and safe.

Yours sincerely



Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

23 June 2023



Janet Anderson PSM  
Aged Care Quality and Safety  
Commissioner

23 June 2023