

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why are we mandating vaccinations?**

We have an obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of our staff and other persons. Based on all the information available to us at this time, we believe that vaccination is a reasonably practicable step we must take to protect the health and safety of our people and our local communities from exposure to COVID-19.

Given that we provide an essential service to NDIS participants in Albury, Wagga and Central West regions, it is vital that we ensure the continuity of our services and that the delivery of our services does not expose those communities to the risk of COVID-19.

Our decision has been supported by a range of information including detailed risk assessments, feedback and insights from our staff and Health and Safety Representatives and information from external stakeholders.

### **Who will this decision apply to?**

This decision will apply to all workers, including frontline and corporate office staff.

We will also be talking to key third parties who attend our workplaces and asking them to do the same at Mercy Connect workplaces.

### **What does it mean for me if I am not or don't want to be vaccinated?**

The effect of this decision is that we are issuing a lawful and reasonable directive to staff to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

We want to ensure that all staff members have a reasonable opportunity to comply with this direction. As such, for staff members who have not yet had the opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, you will need to ensure you receive both doses by 31 December 2021. We will be running additional vaccination clinics to support staff to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations within this timeframe and we encourage staff to keep an eye out for further communications about these clinics.

For staff members who have not yet shared their vaccination status with us or have indicated that they would prefer not to receive the vaccine, a member of our People & Culture team will be in touch to discuss next steps.

We appreciate that everyone's circumstances are different and need to be approached on a case-by-case basis, in a way that respects privacy and confidentiality. Mercy Connect will reimburse the cost of any General Practitioner / medical appointments (i.e., up to a total cost of \$75) for any staff who have already seen their GP / Specialist or who are yet to obtain medical advice needed to either receive the vaccination, or an exemption from doing so.

Please note that some medical appointments will already be covered by Medicare. In this case, payment would not be provided by Mercy Connect.

In some cases, a decision not to be vaccinated may mean that ongoing employment with Mercy Connect is not possible.

### **What is the timeline for the vaccination process?**

All staff will be required to have received both COVID-19 vaccines by 31 December 2021.

### **What support is the Mercy Connect offering me?**

Mercy Connect has introduced the following supports:

1. Mercy Connect will reimburse the cost of any General Practitioner / medical appointments (i.e., up to a total cost of \$75) for any staff who have already seen their GP / Specialist or who are yet to obtain medical advice needed to either receive the vaccination, or an exemption from doing so.
  - a. Please note that some medical appointments will already be covered by Medicare. In this case, payment would not be provided by Mercy Connect.
2. Mercy Connect will provide special paid leave (up to one (1) day / shift) for any unvaccinated staff who subsequently experiences illness after their COVID-19 vaccination. Please contact People and Culture to discuss further if you have taken personal leave due to adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccination. You will need to provide evidence of your vaccination date.
3. Mercy Connect will cover full-time unvaccinated employees' time off work (without any loss of pay) if the General Practitioner / medical appointment to have the COVID-19 vaccination is required during work hours.
  - a. Part-time and casual unvaccinated employees are encouraged to receive their COVID-19 vaccination outside of work hours.

For staff who are feeling uncertain or concerned, you are welcome to reach out to your colleagues, line managers or take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program. AccessEAP can be contacted on 1800 81 87 28 or [www.accesseap.com.au](http://www.accesseap.com.au)