

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurse leaders back measures to safeguard elderly against flu

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) supports a Federal Government push to boost flu vaccination rates amongst aged-care workers, and says this should be extended to all health workers who come into contact with nursing home residents, visitors and residents themselves.

There has been a record 105,000 cases of confirmed flu nationally this winter, and at least 14 nursing home deaths in Victoria and Tasmania.

“ACN would like to offer our deepest and most sincere condolences to those who have lost a loved one this winter season due to influenza,” Australian College of Nursing Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said.

“Influenza is a serious health issue, especially for vulnerable people within our community such as elderly residents in aged-care settings,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“ACN welcomes any measure by the Federal Government that is going to help boost the vaccination rates of aged-care workers,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“Additionally, ACN believes that immunisation should be promoted and encouraged for residents of aged-care facilities as well as visitors, as a further safeguard measure.

“Furthermore, ACN holds the strong view that there needs to be at least one Registered Nurse (RN) on duty during every single shift in aged-care facilities.

“Ensuring that an RN is on duty for every shift could help with recognising the early signs and symptoms of flu in residents and enable the aged-care setting to be able to act swiftly and appropriately. Additionally, RNs working within aged-care settings are well-placed and skilled to be able to administer immunisation,” Adjunct Professor Ward added.

Under the National Immunisation Program, people aged 65 years and over are eligible for a free flu vaccination.

ACN offers an Immunisation for Registered Nurses and Midwives course, designed for registered nurses working in health areas where administration of immunisation is part of their role, as well as for registered nurses wanting to enhance their career opportunities. For more information go to <https://www.acn.edu.au/immunisation-registered-nurses-and-midwives>.

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For interviews contact ACN Executive Assistant Narelle Barrie on 02 6283 3459 or Kristen Connell on 0400 054 227.

Notes to Editors: The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva. An organisation not afraid to challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, ACN is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN's membership includes nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

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