



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

Ref No: MC23-015610

Ms Elizabeth Hart
elizmhart@gmail.com

Dear Ms Hart

I refer to your correspondence of 15 August 2023 to the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP regarding health practitioners' participation in the Australian Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Your letter has been referred to the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP. The Minister has asked me to reply.

There are no requirements for healthcare professionals to administer COVID-19 vaccines if they do not wish to. Participation in the COVID-19 Vaccination roll-out is voluntary. It is up to sites that meet the COVID-19 Vaccine Program (the program) eligibility requirements to express their interest to participate in the program. These requirements include but are not limited to holding a valid accreditation through the National General Practice Accreditation Scheme, administering vaccines as part of the National Immunisation Program or accreditation with the Quality Care Pharmacy Program. Sites must also meet a range of site requirements. Sites also have the flexibility to pause from administering vaccines if they choose to and may re-commence at any time, providing all eligibility requirements remain met.

The Department of Health and Aged Care does not compel doctors to advise their patients to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The communications and letters distributed to medical practitioners and vaccination sites contain medical advice and changes to the COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

The Government continues to follow advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and regularly communicates changes as new evidence comes to light. ATAGI statements on COVID-19 vaccine recommendations, including their decision-making rationale, are available on www.health.gov.au using the search term 'ATAGI'.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Lutton
A/g Assistant Secretary
National COVID-19 Vaccine Program Division
Department of Health and Aged Care
5 September 2023