
Re: Operation COVID Shield 'Handling Consent Refusal' Guidance

Elizabeth Hart <elizmhart@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 2, 2026 at 3:30 PM

To: minister.butler@health.gov.au

Cc: senator.ruston@aph.gov.au, Senator Malcolm Roberts <senator.roberts@oneration.org.au>, "Babet, Ralph (Senator Office)" <senator.babet@aph.gov.au>, "Antic, Alex (Senator)" <senator.antic@aph.gov.au>, Michelle.Rowland.MP@aph.gov.au, senator.michaelia.cash@aph.gov.au, "Batty, Jack" <Jack.Batty@parliament.sa.gov.au>, "Clutterham, Claire (MP Office)" <claire.clutterham.mp@aph.gov.au>

For the attention of:The Hon. Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

Dear Minister Butler

I am seeking clarification regarding the Australian Government's Operation COVID Shield guidance document for practitioners:*Handling consent refusal by people presenting for vaccination.* (Copy attached.)

This government guidance document for practitioners states that:

"Informed consent is an individual's **voluntary** decision to agree to a healthcare treatment, procedure or intervention, such as a COVID-19 vaccination, in its entirety, after the individual has been provided understandable, sufficient, appropriate and reliable information about the intervention, including the potential risks and benefits."

This government document warns practitioners that they *should not* proceed with COVID-19 vaccination where informed consent is not given, i.e.

"A patient **must** provide informed consent prior to vaccination."

"If a patient has not provided informed consent, you **should not** vaccinate them, even if they are mandated to receive a COVID-19 vaccination to perform particular roles or enter certain settings."

This government guidance for practitioners was **published on 15 December 2021** (publication details attached), **after COVID-19 vaccination mandates had already been implemented in many settings**. The timing of the guidance therefore raises an additional question regarding when and how widely it was communicated to practitioners.

Could you please advise what action was taken by the Australian Government to circulate this *Handling consent refusal* guidance to vaccinating practitioners?

In particular:

- The government guidance for practitioners was published on 15 December 2021 - when was it first circulated to practitioners participating in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout?
- Was the government guidance provided directly to medical practitioners, nurses and pharmacists or other practitioners participating in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout?
- Was it distributed through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and National Boards, professional colleges and associations, medical schools, health departments, public and private health services, vaccination hubs, Primary Health Networks, medical defence organisations and insurers, or other channels?
- Was there any requirement or expectation that vaccinating practitioners read or acknowledge the government guidance? How was this recorded?


I would appreciate any information you can provide regarding how this government guidance was communicated to the practitioners expected to obtain voluntary informed consent during the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

I have also copied relevant political representatives as witnesses that this request has been raised.

Kind regards

Elizabeth Hart
Independent researcher on medical ethics and vaccination policy
vaccinationispolitical.net

2 attachments

Handling consent refusal by people presenting for vaccination handling consent refusal by people presenting for
 **vaccination.pdf** 1063K

 **Publication details for Handling consent refusal by people presenting for vaccination.pdf**
405K