
Re: Operation COVID Shield 'Handling Consent Refusal' Guidance - SA Health

Health:Communicable Diseases <HealthCommunicableDiseases@sa.gov.au>
To: "elizmhart@gmail.com" <elizmhart@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 7, 2026 at 11:30 AM

OFFICIAL

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Dear Ms Hart,

Thank you for your email dated 11 July 2026, to Hon Blair Boyer MP, Minister for Health and Wellbeing, regarding the resource, Handling consent refusal by people presenting for vaccination. As this matter falls within Communicable Disease Control Branch's (CDCB) area of responsibility, CDCB are responding on the Minister's behalf.

The COVID-19 Vaccination Program continues to be administered by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, which provides funded COVID-19 vaccines through primary care providers, including general practices and community pharmacies across Australia. The Australian Government maintains a range of program resources to support health professionals in delivering the program, consistent with arrangements for other National Immunisation Program-funded vaccines. SA Health's immunisation webpages include links to relevant external information and resources, including the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's COVID-19 Vaccination Program website.

The "Handling consent refusal by people presenting for vaccination" document was published in 2021 to assist health professionals at the time mandates may have been in place. This content outlines the standard process for obtaining valid consent, which all immunisation providers complete as part of the pre-vaccination screening assessment prior to administering any vaccine. Valid consent is required before the administration of every vaccine and was a well-established routine practice prior to the commencement of the COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

As responsibility for the COVID-19 Vaccination Program lies with the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, any questions regarding the distribution and promotion of resources developed to support program delivery should be raised directly with that agency, as you have done.

Thank you for your enquiry.

Regards,

Communicable Disease Control Branch | Public Health Division

Department for Health and Wellbeing | SA Health | Government of South Australia

E: Health.PHDBusinessSupport@sa.gov.au | **W:** www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

A: Level 3 Citi Centre Building, Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide SA 5000

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations, and recognise Aboriginal peoples as Traditional Owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia.



From: Elizabeth Hart <elizmhart@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, 11 July 2026 10:55 AM
To: Health:Minister for Health <ministerforhealth@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Operation COVID Shield 'Handling Consent Refusal' Guidance - SA Health

For the attention of:
The Hon. Blair Boyer MP
Minister for Health and Wellbeing

Dear Minister

I recently wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Mark Butler MP, seeking information regarding the communication and distribution of the Australian Government's Operation COVID Shield guidance document *COVID-19 vaccination – Handling consent refusal by people presenting for vaccination*. A copy of my correspondence is forwarded below for your information.

I would be grateful if you could advise whether SA Health received this Commonwealth guidance document.

If so, I would appreciate any information you can provide regarding when it was received and what action, if any, was taken to communicate or distribute the guidance within SA Health.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

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

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Elizabeth Hart <elizmhart@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jun 2, 2026 at 3:30 PM
Subject: Re: Operation COVID Shield 'Handling Consent Refusal' Guidance
To: <minister.butler@health.gov.au>
Cc: <senator.ruston@aph.gov.au>, Senator Malcolm Roberts <senator.roberts@onenation.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