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Morrison walks away from aged care and disability staff

The Morrison Government is attempting to walk away from the clear commitments given by Minister Greg Hunt, both in public statements and private meetings with aged care unions and the ACTU – that aged care and disability staff would be vaccinated alongside residents through inreach programs which delivered vaccines to their workplaces.

Despite knowing from the early days of the pandemic that unvaccinated staff presented a significant risk to vulnerable aged care and disability residents and advice from ATAGI that they should be prioritised the Federal Government has failed to provide vaccines for workers in aged and disability care.

This has resulted in appallingly low rates of vaccination for staff in aged and disability care, months after the beginning of the rollout in which they were supposedly in the highest priority group.

The Government has abandoned inreach for aged care and disability staff, forcing workers who are often in low-paid, insecure work, to take time off to seek out vaccines for themselves. Unions and employers across aged care and disability have said that the only way to ensure sufficient levels of vaccination is to undertake workplace vaccination.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“The Morrison Government still has no plan to vaccinate the more than 300,000 people who care for and protect our most vulnerable Australians despite repeated assurances to aged care unions and the ACTU dating back to the start of 2021 that they would be provided with vaccines in their workplaces.

“The Morrison Government is insisting that nothing could have been done to improve the vaccine rollout in aged care, but in Victoria the state-run system has achieved very high levels of vaccination of staff and residents. The Federal Government has never treated this with the urgency that was required and people are suffering as a result.

“Both the Victorian and Queensland State Governments are now bailing out the Morrison Government by mobilising additional resources to finish the aged care rollout. This would not have been required if the Federal Government had acted with the urgency that this situation has always demanded.”

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