

Friday, 23 April 2021

Morrison walks away from workplace vaccinations for aged care, disability support workers

The Morrison Government is backing away from previous commitments to provide vaccinations in workplaces for all workers covered by the highest priority 1A grouping, including those in aged care and disability services.

Instead, workers in these groups, many of whom are casual, will now have to travel to vaccination centres, with no commitment from the Federal Government that they will be supported in the event they have to give up shifts or suffer side effects which prevent them from working. This lack of support puts at risk the high level of vaccination necessary to keep COVID out of these high risk settings.

This broken promise will create barriers to vaccination for critical, frontline healthcare workers who care for some of the most vulnerable people in our society, forcing many to choose between getting vaccinated and getting paid.

The Morrison Government has failed to learn the lesson from the mass testing efforts in 2020 which showed that people in insecure work must be supported financially so that they can keep themselves, their families and our community safe.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien,

“The Morrison Government is abandoning frontline healthcare workers who have kept vulnerable Australians safe through the pandemic and need to be supported through the vaccination process.

“The target that the Government has set – to complete 1A by the middle of the year – is inexplicably slow. These workers were told they would be treated with the same urgency and attention as other frontline health staff, but many will end up waiting 6 months to be vaccinated.

“We are calling on the Morrison Government to support workers who will now need to take time away from work in order to get vaccinated, and face routine side effects without sick leave. It is unreasonable and counter-productive to ask these workers to choose between getting paid and getting the vaccine.”

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