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Colbeck “comfortable” with failed vaccine rollout

Aged care Minister Richard Colbeck says he is “comfortable with where we’re at” on the vaccine rollout in aged care which has seen only 15 per cent of staff vaccinated and the rest facing serious financial disincentives to do so.

The Federal Government has abandoned the plan for workplace vaccinations for aged care workers, forcing the entire workforce to take time away from work to get vaccinated and deal with any routine side-effects.

These workers are in the group that the Morrison Government correctly identified as the most at risk and the highest priority for vaccination – three months ago. Every effort should be made to vaccinate these workers.

Instead, the Federal Government is asking low-paid, insecure workers in aged care to go without wages to get vaccinated and deal with any side effects. This Government has failed in this essential task and should hand over responsibility for the rollout in aged and disability care to the States, who have proven much more effective.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“The federal government has abandoned workers when it comes to in-workplace vaccination. Workers shouldn’t be facing barriers to get vaccination. We need financial support for anyone who is being asked to give up hours of work in order to get vaccinated, especially in aged and disability care.

“In State-controlled aged care in Victoria we have almost 100 per cent vaccination – in the Federally administered private system, we are again on the brink of crisis.

“The Morrison Government has failed to protect the most vulnerable in our community from this virus and should hand control of the rollout to the States.

“Workers in aged and disability care want to get vaccinated, but the Morrison Government is forcing them to choose between supporting themselves and their families and getting the job.

“Half a day to get vaccinated and potentially one or two full days if you experience side-effects is a huge loss of income for an insecure aged care worker.”

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