

# Health Employment Directive

## No. 02/20

Effective Date:  
25 / 06 / 2020

Supersedes:  
n/a

### Vaccination requirements for employees in residential aged care facilities during COVID-19

#### 1. Compliance

Compliance with this Health Employment Directive (HED) is mandatory.

#### 2. Purpose

To outline requirements for new and existing employees working in or visiting a Queensland Health residential aged care facility regarding vaccination against influenza, due to the declaration of a public health emergency in relation to coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

This HED provides for relevant arrangements under the public health direction *Aged Care Direction (No. 5)* issued under section 362B of the *Public Health Act 2005*.

#### 3. Duration

This HED commenced on 1 May 2020 and will cease on the expiry or revocation of Chief Health Officer Public Health Direction – *Aged Care Direction (No. 5)* (and as replaced from time to time).

#### 4. Legislative Provision

Section 51A of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*.

#### 5. Application

This HED applies to all health service employees engaged under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* (the Act) in Hospital and Health Services and the Department of Health.

#### 6. Related documents

- *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth)
- *Public Health Act 2005*
- [Chief Health Officer public health direction – Aged Care Direction \(No. 5\)](#) (and as replaced from time to time)
- *Australian Immunisation Handbook* (<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>)
- *Australian Immunisation Handbook – Influenza chapter* (Influenza (flu) chapter - <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccine-preventable-diseases/influenza-flu>)
- Flu vaccination information for aged care facilities - [Information about mandatory influenza vaccination for persons entering or remaining on the premises of a residential aged care facility: Advice for residential aged care facility operators \(Resource document\)](#)



**Directive:****7. Restrictions accessing aged care facilities**

Employees are not to enter an aged care facility if they:

- are unwell (the person has a temperature equal to or higher than 37.5 degrees, or symptoms of acute respiratory infection)
- have travelled overseas or had contact with a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- have visited a [COVID-19 hotspot](#) in the last 14 days
- have not had the 2020 flu vaccine (unless it is unavailable to the employee - refer section 9.1).

**8. Vaccination requirement – New and existing employees**

From 1 May 2020, new and existing employees working in and visiting aged care facilities are required to have had the 2020 flu vaccination (unless it is unavailable to the employee - refer section 9.1) in order to be able to enter a residential aged care facility.

**9. Existing employees****9.1 Exceptional circumstances**

There are some circumstances when an existing employee cannot be safely vaccinated in order to satisfy the influenza vaccination requirements for their position due to medical reasons e.g. allergy – refer section 9.3. These exemptions follow the recommendations and clinical advice provided in the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* (<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccine-preventable-diseases/influenza-flu>). In this instance, the employee is exempt from the vaccination requirements when they provide documentary evidence to the employer – refer section 11.

Where an employee has attempted to receive their influenza vaccination but is unable to do so due to the vaccine being unavailable at the time, the employee is exempt from the requirements until such time as the vaccine becomes available. The employee must receive the vaccination as soon as possible after the vaccine becomes available.

**9.2 Working arrangements**

In the event the existing employee is unable to meet the vaccination requirements other than those referred to in section 9.1, the employee should:

- be temporarily deployed to another work unit and return when the influenza vaccination requirement under the relevant Chief Health Officer Public Health Direction – *Aged Care Direction (No. 5)* (and as replaced from time to time) has been revoked.
- if deployment is not an option, discuss with their line manager other flexible working arrangements; or explore other options in consultation with their local HR Team.

**9.3 Exemptions – *Australian Immunisation Handbook***

Exemptions follow the recommendations and clinical advice provided in the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

The Handbook lists the following two medical contraindications to influenza vaccination:

- Anaphylaxis following a previous dose of influenza vaccine; or
- Anaphylaxis after any component of an influenza vaccine.

Further exceptions are outlined in the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

## 10. New Employees

On and from 1 May 2020, applicants seeking to be engaged in a Queensland Health residential aged care facility must provide documentary evidence to verify that they have had the 2020 flu vaccination, prior to any offer of engagement.

Proof that an applicant has had the 2020 flu vaccination is a condition of employment in a Queensland Health residential aged care facility until such time as the Chief Health Officer Public Health Direction – *Aged Care Direction (No. 5)* (and as replaced from time to time) expires or is revoked. This requirement should be reflected in any aged care role descriptions and/or vacancy advertisements whilst the direction remains in place.

Where, due to medical reasons (refer section 9.3), an applicant cannot be safely vaccinated in order to satisfy the influenza vaccination requirements for work in a residential aged care facility, the person is not to be engaged at this time unless they are able to be temporarily deployed to another work unit. The person may only commence in the residential aged care facility when the influenza vaccination requirement under the relevant Chief Health Officer Public Health Direction – *Aged Care Direction (No. 5)* (and as replaced from time to time) has been revoked.

## 11. Evidence and documentation

Where the employer does not hold a record of the flu vaccination or of a medical contraindication for the employee, appropriate documentary evidence must be provided as soon as practicable to the line manager and/or delegate. Documentary evidence may include a notice of vaccination from the dispensing pharmacist/health practitioner or a letter from a medical practitioner advising of medical contraindication and therefore exemption from influenza vaccination requirement.

This evidence should be collected as part of the employer's immunisation record keeping.

## 12. Definitions

COVID-19 emergency	Has the same meaning as under Chapter 8 of the <i>Public Health Act 2005</i> .
COVID-19 hotspot	Means a COVID-19 hotspot declared by the Chief Health Officer under section 362B of the <i>Public Health Act</i> .
Residential aged care facility	Means a facility at which accommodation, and personal care or nursing care or both, are provided to a person in respect of whom a residential care subsidy or a flexible care subsidy is payable under the <i>Aged Care Act 1997</i> of the Commonwealth.

## 13. History

<b>HED No. 02/20 June 2020</b>	Issued under section 51A of the <i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011</i> as a condition of employment for health service employees.
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## 14. Approval and implementation

### Directive custodian

Chief Human Resources Officer

### Approval by Chief Executive

Dr John Wakefield  
Director-General

**Approval date: 25 / 06 / 2020**