



Health Bulletin 2 December 2021

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[Free Rapid Antigen Tests for Early Childhood Services](#)

Free rapid antigen test kits will be available to kindergartens and long day care services as part of an initiative of the Victorian Government to reduce coronavirus-related disruptions to children's learning.

From 15 November, the test kits will be available to early childhood services subject to an outbreak and will be distributed to all eligible services by the end of that week.

The opt-in initiative will allow for testing of children identified as primary close contacts to reduce pressure on families and ensure early childhood settings are low-risk.

Eligibility of early childhood services is dependent on whether a system to collect, record and hold the testing information exists. Parents and carers can then opt-in for their children to be part of the initiative. Children identified as primary close contacts will need to receive a negative standard PCR test on day six of quarantine, and are then able to take a rapid antigen test each morning before they attend the early childhood service from days eight to 14. The tests indicate a result for coronavirus within 15-30 minutes, supporting children's return to early learning as quick as possible.

For extra caution in early childhood settings, the Victorian Government have implemented staff vaccination requirements, grants for improved ventilation and improved cleaning and focused contact tracing to prevent any further delays to children returning to learning.

Minister for Early Childhood, Ingrid Stitt welcomed the initiative, stating "these rapid antigen tests will help limit disruption for our children and their

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these rapid antigen tests will help limit disruption for our children and their families while supporting our early childhood services”.

To read the Media Release, click [here](#).

Extra mental health support for new parents

On 15 November 2021 the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon James Merlino issued a Media Release confirming that new parents will soon have better access to the vital mental health supports they need.

One in five women will experience a perinatal mental health concern between conception and the time their baby is 12 months old, with anxiety and depression the most common types of illness. Up to one in eight of their partners will also experience a mental health condition.

The investment of \$6.8 million adds to the \$20 million already delivered this year for perinatal mental health services across the state, including \$10 million for six Parent Infant Units across Victoria for women with severe mental illness and their infants, and \$7.2 million for the Perinatal Emotional Health Program to deliver community, family-centred services.

In announcing the investment Mr Merlino said “We can’t expect new parents to give their newborns the best start in life without first looking after themselves – and this extra support will make sure every Victorian who needs support can get it quickly”.

To read the Media Release, click [here](#).

Tech innovation to tackle superbug situation

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has launched an initiative to spark innovation in an attempt to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The CSIRO has partnered with Cicada Innovations, a “deep-tech incubator” renowned for supporting tech innovators to validate, commercialise and scale high-impact technologies. The partnership will deliver a free, online commercialisation course to help build an emerging industry of products and solutions to tackle AMR.

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines such as antibiotics. These “superbugs” make infections harder to treat which increases the spread of disease and the risk of severe illness and death in humans.

Currently, at least 700,000 people die each year from drug-resistant infections (such as multidrug-resistant tuberculosis). However, some modelling indicates this will increase significantly to 10 million deaths each year globally by 2050.

The CSIRO acknowledges that new drugs alone are not enough to combat AMR. This highlights the urgent need for innovative science, technology and engineering solutions to mitigate AMR now and into the future.

The “AMR Commercialisation 101” course provided by Cicada Innovations and the CSIRO is open to small and medium-sized enterprises and researchers regardless of experience in AMR, and from any sector where technologies could be adapted to solve AMR challenges. Sally-Ann Williams, CEO of Cicada Innovations, said, “This course is a gateway for innovators looking to gain a foundational understanding of AMR and how to validate an idea and make an impact.”

See CSIRO’s full media release [here](#) and register for AMR Commercialisation 101 [here](#).

ABS releases latest health statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has released its findings regarding patient experiences in Australia for the 2020-21 financial year.

The findings are drawn from the Patient Experience Survey, which is a topic contained in the Multipurpose Household Survey conducted throughout Australia. Over 28,000 people over the age of 15 took part in

...they can connect with other people who might be able to help them with the survey.

The survey found there was a decrease in health service use in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 for those who:

- saw a GP (82.4% compared to 83.2%)
- saw a dental professional (47.9% compared to 49.5%)
- visited a hospital emergency department (ED) (13.4% compared to 14.4%)
- saw an after hours GP (5.1% compared to 7.1%).

Results also indicated that people felt they were waiting longer than acceptable for a medical specialist appointment (21.7%), compared to waiting for a GP appointment (16.6%).

Those in outer regional, remote or very remote areas were more likely to report waiting longer than they felt acceptable for an appointment than those living in major cities.

You can read the detailed findings [here](#).

How we can help

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15 Feb 2024

Much has been made in recent years of the pervasive nature of bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment (BDSH) in the medical profession, and in particular in medical training.

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A recent article in the International Journal for Quality in Healthcare (2024,36(1)), by Michael and David Greenfie (School of Population Health, UniNSW), highlights the challenges for improving the ...

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