

Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19)

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health care is adapted to any changes in the needs of vulnerable groups during the outbreak; and consider and respond to requests for health assistance.

State and territory governments have primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining public health services, public hospitals and laboratories. They are responsible for the operational aspects of clinical care responses and have primary responsibility for the management of cases. They will collaborate with relevant organisations to fill identified service provision gaps; support hospitals in coping with increased demand by considering opening more beds, changing staff to patient ratios; cancelling elective procedures or working in partnership with local private hospitals to manage urgent cases where appropriate; implement new models of care as required; coordinate allocation within their jurisdiction of available resources required for clinical care; and where possible, share clinical resources where and when needed.

Other health care stakeholders are responsible for service provision and linking with and participating in the clinical care network by sharing resources; implementing national care guidelines (including triage protocols if required) and delivering outbreak control measures where required. They will implement patient triage, manage patients and provide after-hours care as required; coordinate locally between services; collaborate with state and territory health authorities to identify and fill local gaps in services, particularly where there are vulnerable populations and implement new models of care according to a novel coronavirus outbreak policy.

4.1.4 Implementation of public health measures

The Australian Government is responsible for ensuring the resources and systems required to mount an effective national response are readily available; for international border activities; and for ensuring that Australia meets its international obligations. This includes maintaining the NIR, the NMS and IHR core capacities including maintenance of the NFP.

The Australian Government will also be responsible for residential aged care facilities; working with other healthcare providers to set standards to promote the safety and security of people in aged care and other institutional settings; and establishing and maintaining infection control guidelines, healthcare safety and quality standards. The Australian Government will fast-track assessment and approval of a customised vaccine, should this become available; procure vaccines; develop a national novel coronavirus vaccination policy and a national novel coronavirus immunisation program; and communicate immunisation information on the program to the general public and health professionals.

The Australian Government and state and territory governments will work together to provide advice and leadership on the appropriate methods and timing for implementing public health measures. They will develop communication strategies and resources for novel coronavirus immunisation and coordinate implementation of novel coronavirus immunisation programs. They will also contribute to building linkages between human and animal health resources and activities.

State and territory governments are responsible for the operational aspects of public health responses. They will undertake contact tracing; coordinate distribution of antiviral drugs and disseminate protocols on the use of antivirals; implement social distancing measures as per national recommendations and local risk assessment; and implement infection control guidelines and healthcare safety and quality standards. They will establish systems to promote the safety and security of people in aged care and other institutional settings and support outbreak investigation and management in residential aged care facilities, schools, prisons and other institutions.

State and territory governments will develop and validate specific novel coronavirus tests; undertake novel coronavirus laboratory testing as required to monitor the outbreak and for individual patient care; implement testing protocols to support case management, surveillance needs and to preserve laboratory capacity; support and undertake novel coronavirus point of care testing if recommended.