

VACCINATION STRATEGY FOR NSW CUSTODIAL SETTINGS* 2021

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network will ensure that every patient who is in custody has the opportunity to be vaccinated as per ATAGI guidelines and NSW Health.

The Network will also ensure that all staff working in these settings are fully vaccinated.

The Network will work closely with Corrective Services NSW, Youth Justice NSW and other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our staff and patients.

This strategy is part of a broader Network strategy that includes regular rapid antigen testing of staff at key locations, training in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), quarantine for all new inmates, isolation of COVID-19 positive inmates and other measures of infection prevention and control.

APPROACH

There is a three-tiered approach:

❖ Entering custody	If not vaccinated, new inmates will be offered a 1 st dose vaccine within 4 days of entering custody (unless they are already COVID-19 positive).
❖ In custody	If not fully vaccinated, patients in custody will be offered vaccines regularly even if they have previously refused vaccination.
❖ Leaving custody	If not fully vaccinated upon release, patients will be provided with information on vaccination status, available vaccines and how to obtain vaccination in the community.

PRIORITY AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Network's strategy is to identify the groups with the most complex health care needs and who were particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 early as targets for the vaccination program – including aged, frail and disabled patients, young people, Aboriginal patients, pregnant women and immuno-compromised patients. Clinical directors will provide guidance and leadership for the program.

PRIORITY GROUP	ACTIONS
Aboriginal	To provide materials in messaging appropriate to Aboriginal patients. Family members, community elders and Aboriginal organisations to be enlisted to support efforts to encourage vaccination; as well as CSNSW and Aboriginal Health Workers.
Aged Care patients, immune-compromised patients and those with other complex health conditions	To engage with population health staff, cancer care nurses, welfare officers and support workers early in the vaccination program to identify the most at risk population. To strongly encourage and make available a vaccine.
Youth	To engage Aboriginal elders and “aunties” to encourage vaccine uptake in Aboriginal young people in custody. To encourage all young people in custody (working closely with youth justice centre Nursing Unit Managers) to have the vaccine most suitable for their age group, as recommended by ATAGI.
ESL	To provide vaccine information in multiple languages for patients who may be hesitant to have a vaccine due to lack of understanding. Health promotion officers to produce language specific resources – and translators to be made available if needed.
Pregnant Women	To work with midwives and shared care General Practitioners to explain vaccine safety and measure to protect expectant mothers and their unborn babies from COVID-19.

Vaccinations are not mandatory for people in custody but every effort will be made to encourage them to take the vaccine. Vaccines are delivered as per ATAGI guidelines.

*This document covers the vaccination strategy for NSW State-run custodial settings (including John Moroney Correctional Complex). The Network also managed a vaccination program for its Forensic Hospital in Malabar.

Dated: 22 November 2021