

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC Minister for Health Minister for Ambulance Services



Thursday 2 April, 2020

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM TO WORK AS ONE DURING PANDEMIC

The Victorian Government has struck a deal with the state's major private hospital operators to ensure they can continue to care for Victorians during the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today finalised the agreement to support Victorian private hospitals, including St Vincent's Private Hospital, Epworth HealthCare, Cabrini Health, Ramsay Health Care, St John of God Health Care, Healthscope and Healthe Care Australia.

The deal will see Victoria's public and private hospitals work together to relieve pressure on public hospitals and ensure the entire health system is operating at full capacity.

Victoria's healthcare professionals are on the frontline of this deadly virus and this agreement will ensure our private hospital medical workforce and hospital staff, including porters, cleaners, cooks and security guards keep their jobs and remain in the healthcare system for the duration of the pandemic – when we need them most.

The deal follows a guarantee from the Commonwealth to ensure the viability of all private hospitals after the suspension of all non-urgent surgery tomorrow.

Significant work is underway to prepare Victoria's hospitals for the prolonged increase in demand during this coronavirus pandemic as the numbers of cases increase daily.

The Victorian Government has also recently hired 200 nurses from Epworth and Cabrini hospitals to undertake important contact-tracing work – identifying public exposure sites and close contacts.

Healthcare specialists, including retired doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics and allied health professionals, have also been called upon to return to work as part of the Government's coronavirus response.

The Victorian Government is continuing to talk to smaller private hospitals and day procedure centres about extra capacity they might be able to provide when the peak of the pandemic hits.

Victoria's health system will receive a massive \$1.3 billion injection to quickly establish an extra 4,000 ICU beds and purchase millions more masks, gloves and gowns to meet the expected surge in cases during the peak of the pandemic.

The package is in addition to the \$537 million the Victorian Government has already invested in our health system as part of our coronavirus response to keep our dedicated health care workers safe.

For the latest information and advice on coronavirus visit dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"This agreement we have secured will ensure our health system is working at full capacity during the pandemic."

"Our whole healthcare sector has a vital role to play in fighting coronavirus – and this deal ensures we have one system of care."

"We look forward to working in partnership with our private and public healthcare providers to ensure Victoria is ready to respond to the coronavirus pandemic."

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