

# Media Release

**The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC**

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services



Saturday, 6 June 2020

## MORE HEALTH SUPPORT FOR OUR FRONTLINE HEROES

Victoria's dedicated doctors, nurses, midwives and healthcare students will have greater access to additional health and wellbeing services to help them through the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today announced almost \$850,000 in funding for frontline healthcare workers who have been working around the clock for months to keep Victorians safe and may have been impacted by their work.

The extra workload in preparing for the predicted pandemic demand, coupled with mental health issues and stress caused by worry about the global health crisis, can take a toll on the overall health of frontline workers.

The Victorian Doctors Health Program (VDHP) will receive \$500,000 to support more doctors and medical students to access the free, confidential advice and support to help address any concerns about their wellbeing that may have arisen from the pandemic.

This expansion of the government's existing funding will allow the VDHP to provide more compassionate and confidential assistance with doctors' health concerns such as stress, mental health problems, concerns about substance use or other health issues.

The Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria offers a similar free, independent and confidential support service for nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery who may be experiencing anxiety, depression or have concerns about alcohol or drugs.

This service will receive nearly \$350,000 to expand their telehealth services and cope with the anticipated increase in demand for their screening, assessment, referrals and individual and group support sessions for those with health concerns.

The announcement of this extra funding coincides with CrazySocks4Docs Day, an annual event founded by cardiologist Dr Geoff Toogood and observed on the first Friday in June, to help break down stigma and emphasise the importance of good mental health among our medical professionals.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

*"Our doctors, nurses and midwives provide better care when they're healthy themselves. We're putting the wellbeing of frontline health workers first as they continue working around the clock to keep Victoria safe during the pandemic."*

*"Whether they're treating people infected with coronavirus or keeping the rest of our health system running smoothly, the ongoing dedication of our healthcare staff during these challenging times is inspiring."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley

*"Our healthcare workers look after Victorians at their most vulnerable - we're supporting them to focus on their own health, so they can keep doing their incredible work each and every day."*