Thursday, 23 July 2020

SUPPORTING VICTORIAN WORKERS TO GET TESTED AND STAY HOME

The Victorian Government will extend the coronavirus worker support payment to make sure Victorians don't have to choose between the safety of their workmates and their community – and putting food on the table.

We know that people are most infectious when they first experience symptoms but Department of Health and Human Services data shows that as many as nine out of ten people who later test positive are not self-isolating between the onset of symptoms and getting a test. In addition, 53 per cent of positive cases did not isolate between being tested and receiving their results.

We know too many Victorians are in insecure work, don't have sick leave entitlements and can't afford to miss a shift. That's why our current worker support payment recognises that the requirement to self-isolate or quarantine can leave workers and their families struggling to make ends meet, forgoing an income while they're following health advice.

Under the scheme, a one-off payment of $1,500 is available to workers who are unable to work during their isolation, have no income during this period, and are not entitled to any paid sick leave, special pandemic leave or other income support.

The Government will now extend the scheme to ensure that as soon as a person is tested, they will be eligible for a $300 support payment from the Victorian Government – as long as they meet the eligibility of the existing scheme.

This will ensure workers don't have to pay the price for following health advice while they are waiting for their results – meaning they can afford to isolate immediately and avoid spreading the virus further through workplaces.

Victoria has one of the highest testing rates in the world and we're making it easier than ever to get tested for coronavirus with new testing sites being established every week right across the state.

There are currently more than 160 places you can get tested at across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria – including health services, GPs, drive-throughs and mobile pop-up sites.

Victorians are reminded that as of 11:59pm last night, everyone in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire is required to wear a face covering when leaving home for one of the four reasons, unless they have a medical exemption.

The fine for not wearing a face covering is $200. Victoria Police will exercise discretion over the next seven days, as this is a significant adjustment for the community. However, all Victorians are expected to be making every effort to wear a face covering from today.

For more information about coronavirus call 1800 675 398 or visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"To fight this virus we need every Victorian who is sick to get tested and then stay home. If you are waiting for a test, you must stay home until you are notified of your result."

"We know that having to isolate can mean missing work– and no one should be making the choice between their health and putting food on the table – that's why we're making sure those who need our support can get it."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Our greatest tool for fighting this virus is following the rules – and whether it is rolling out more testing sites, or providing worker support we'll stand by every Victorian as we work together to slow the spread."

"We all need to work together to get tested, protect our health system and save lives."