

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Equality



Monday, 8 February 2021

KEEPING OUR HEALTHCARE WORKERS HEALTHY

A new virtual support centre for healthcare workers will make sure those who dedicate their time to caring for Victorians have access to dedicated physical and mental health support when they need it, no matter where they live.

Minister for Health Martin Foley today announced the opening of the healthcare worker wellbeing centre as part of a \$9.8 million investment from the Andrews Labor Government to protect the physical safety of workers in health services and provide improved support for mental health and wellbeing.

The centre will provide a central resource for staff directing them to existing tailored support programs, but will expand in the coming months – taking on feedback from healthcare workers on the care they need.

Through Safer Care Victoria, healthcare workers will shape the future of the centre and the support it provides – responding to the areas of greatest need for workers in hospitals, primary health, aged care and community health services.

The centre will share tools, resources and training to help organisational leaders and managers better support their staff, and look at ways to create system-wide changes to ensure worker wellbeing is a priority across the entire Victorian health system.

The Labor Government's healthcare worker wellbeing package also includes the Healthcare Worker Wellbeing Grant Program – which has already received more than 80 applications for extra in-person psychosocial support for the health workforce.

The new centre will complement the Government's existing initiatives to keep staff safe like peer training, individual services' wellbeing programs, targeted family violence support for healthcare workers and a recently-expanded pilot to support staff who lodge a mental health injury worker's compensation claim.

The Labor Government is supporting our healthcare workforce to stay safe as we move through Victoria's recovery from the pandemic – including PPE spotters in hospitals, spot checks of health services' COVIDSafe plans, PPE fit-testing, improvements to staff amenities and data analysis of COVID infections that have occurred in hospitals.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"The coronavirus pandemic highlighted how important it is to protect the wellbeing of our healthcare workers – not just in providing a safe work environment, but to address the stress and anxiety they may feel day to day.

"Our health workforce has given us so much in the past year – and we won't lose our focus on them, with this new worker wellbeing centre to make sure they have the tools they need to stay safe and happy on the job."