

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Tuesday, 19 October 2021

NEW RESPIRATORY CLINICS TO REDUCE PRESSURE ON HOSPITALS

The Victorian Government will rapidly set up 20 new GP respiratory clinics to enable hundreds of Victorians to access COVID-19 testing and respiratory assessments close to home, without going to hospital.

This \$23.8 million initiative will see primary care clinics playing a greater role in easing the load on hospitals by reducing emergency department presentations and avoidable visits to hospital.

It's estimated the respiratory clinics will support more than 350 patients of all ages a week who have respiratory symptoms, to ensure they receive immediate support in the management of their illness.

Services will be available to those with or without a Medicare card, at no cost to the patient, with the fit-for-purpose facilities open 16 hours a day, seven days a week.

The new clinics will be located in the LGAs of Hume, Wyndham, Brimbank, Moreland, Darebin, Moonee Valley, Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Melton, Casey, Greater Dandenong, Monash, Kingston, Cardinia, Whittlesea, Banyule and Boroondara.

GP respiratory clinics already operating in areas with high COVID-19 caseloads will also be supported to extend their operating hours.

The clinics will be staffed by appropriately trained and qualified clinicians, including general practitioners and nurses.

The new clinics will be set up in three to six weeks, while operating hours of existing, selected clinics, will be extended within two weeks.

There are currently 28 Commonwealth GP respiratory clinics located across the state, including 18 in regional Victoria.

Clinics will receive establishment and operating grants to cover staffing and facility costs.

Clinics will be identified through an Expression of Interest process led by Primary Health Networks. Expressions of interest opened on Monday 18 October 2021.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"Establishing GP respiratory clinics in areas of high demand is about ensuring Victorians have easy access to free, high-quality care close to home – reducing visits to busy emergency departments."

"Increasing COVID-19 cases in Victoria has highlighted the critical role of primary care – ensuring Victorians can quickly access the respiratory support they need, 16 hours day, seven days a week."

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