

Putting Patients First



The Hon Daniel Andrews MP

Premier

Martin Foley MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

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PUTTING PATIENTS FIRST: A PANDEMIC REPAIR PLAN

Across our nation – and the world – the pandemic has put unprecedented pressure on health systems.

Whether it's the sharp increase of critical COVID patients, disrupted care resulting in longer hospital recovery time, or people delaying seeing their GP, the last few years have really knocked our health system around.

When we came to government, we put an end to the war on our paramedics. We took ambulance response times from the worst in our history to the best. We did it by working with our nurses, ambos, allied health professionals and doctors – and with a clear plan to get it done.

Now – just like we've done before – we'll ease the pressure on our hospitals and healthcare workers by putting patients first and rolling out our *Pandemic Repair Plan* for more staff, better hospitals and first-class care.

After two years of an unprecedented global pandemic and record growth in demand, the health system will receive a massive \$12 billion boost as part of the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

Our *Pandemic Repair Plan* will include:

- Training and hiring up to 7,000 healthcare workers, of which 5,000 are nurses
- More paramedics, more support for paramedics and increased capacity for Triple Zero call-takers and dispatchers
- An unprecedented package to recruit, train, upskill and support healthcare workers across the sector, helping relieve pressure on the system and improving care for all Victorians
- \$2.3 billion to upgrade and build new hospitals, including \$236 million to double emergency department capacity in Casey and Werribee
- A record investment in surgical capacity across the state to give Victorians the specialist care they need before they end up in the emergency department
- Funding to manage the pandemic across our health system and in the community into the future.

It includes our \$1.5 billion *Covid Catch-Up Plan* to increase surgical activity beyond pre-pandemic levels by providing 40,000 extra surgeries in the next year – reducing the waitlist and building up to a record 240,000 surgeries annually in 2024.

To achieve this, we're establishing Rapid Access Hubs, supporting private hospitals to deliver more public surgeries and transforming Frankston Private Hospital into a Public Surgery Centre with the capacity to perform up to 9,000 public surgeries every year once operational.

We know how important it is that we support our healthcare workforce into the future. That's why we're investing in a raft of packages to give them the help they need to care for Victorians.

Media contact: Kieran Jones 0421 031 900 | Kieran.jones@mstaff.vic.gov.au

Ambulance Victoria will build on its record recruitment levels with an additional \$124 million to put 90 more ambos on the road, which means we've added 790 extra paramedics to the workforce since we came to government. We will also drive new ways to improve patient flow to help unclog emergency departments and prevent ramping.

As part of this, \$12 million will provide a second mobile stroke unit for Melbourne's south east, so stroke victims can get the urgent care they need without delay.

The *Pandemic Repair Plan* also includes more than \$80 million to deliver an additional 400 perioperative nurses, upskill 1,000 nurses and theatre technicians, and recruit up to 2,000 ex-pat and international healthcare workers through a global workforce recruitment drive.

A \$59 million investment will see more than 1,125 Registered Undergraduate Nursing students enter the workforce per year over the next two years and \$9.8 million will support 75 Registered Undergraduate Student of Midwifery positions and flexible approaches to midwifery staffing.

This will help better prepare our future nurses and midwives to care for Victorians, while also providing much needed support on the ground.

Some \$4.7 million will support allied health advanced practice roles to upskill allied health workers and improve patient care, while \$5.6 million will allow an additional 288 graduate enrolled nurses to hit the ground running in our hospitals with the dedicated supports they need.

We'll invest \$1.5 million to support Aboriginal cadetships, scholarships and training support for Aboriginal health students and workers, so more Aboriginal Victorians can get the care they need from nurses and doctors who understand their community, history and culture.

Our health workforce has given so much to our state – and it's had a cost on their mental health. We're investing a further \$4.8 million to expand the Healthcare Worker Wellbeing Centre and to extend the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program to provide one-on-one psychological support for up to 600 additional nurses and midwives.

Following the success of home-based and virtual care programs during the pandemic, \$698 million will be invested in the *Better at Home* program to expand the care patients can access in the comfort of their home, without the inconvenience and cost of travel.

This includes \$3.6 million to establish a transitional care program for people with disability and \$2.1 million to pilot a virtual specialist clinic model, giving Aboriginal Victorians in rural areas access to care on country.

An investment of \$986 million will help our hospitals and emergency departments meet growing demand, employ the staff they need and open new wards – while \$126 million will make sure more Victorians have access to highly specialised therapies and can receive cutting-edge robot assisted surgery.

A \$7.24 million boost will strengthen community-based healthcare services by supporting the integration of GPs into 20 registered community health services and support catch-up of deferred care.

As we move into this highly vaccinated phase of the pandemic, we need to keep managing COVID-19 to minimise disruption in the lives of Victorians – and reduce pressure on our hospitals and health workers.

To ensure that COVID-19 patients have the best chance of a full recovery, we are spending \$521.7 million over two years to support our hospitals treating COVID-19, and a further \$110 million to continue the nation-leading *COVID Positive Pathways* program and to extend our 28 General Practitioner respiratory clinics.

A \$40 million boost will support Local Public Health Units to continue their great work and leverage COVID-19 lessons to provide a connected statewide network, which supports local responses to public health issues.

Women's health, safety and wellbeing will be a priority, with \$19.4 million being invested to support the vital work of women's health services in delivering sexual and reproductive health programs, prevent family violence and provide mental health services.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"The pandemic has put more pressure on our healthcare workers than ever before, and we can't thank them enough for everything they've done to keep Victorians safe."

"That's why we're giving our healthcare workers the extra pair of helping hands they need – so they can give you the very best care."

"Major boosts to hospitals, increased support for our health workforce and more home-based services will give Victorians the care they deserve when they need it most."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"Our nurses, ambos, allied health professionals, doctors, and other healthcare workers have given so much to our state. They have been at the frontline of the coronavirus fight, and now we're making sure they're at the forefront of our Budget."

"The pandemic has shown us that investing in our hospitals, ambulance services and community-based services is the best way to meet the growth in demand and catch up on deferred care."