

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 21 August 2022

PRIORITY PRIMARY CARE CENTRES TO EASE DEMAND ON HOSPITALS

The Andrews Labor Government will establish five new GP-led Priority Primary Care Centres to give Victorians the care they need while easing pressure on our busy emergency departments (EDs).

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced that Priority Primary Care Centres will be established close to five hospitals – giving Victorians an alternative to visiting an ED.

The Labor Government is investing \$14.3 million to establish and run the five new centres, which will provide care for people with conditions that require urgent attention but not an emergency response.

Centres will be established close to the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Northern Hospital Epping, Sunshine Hospital, Monash Medical Centre Clayton, and Grampians Health Ballarat – sites selected following careful consideration of population, community needs and ED demand.

Working with our primary health networks and partner hospitals, these five new centres will open over coming months, and operate seven days a week and 16 hours a day. The centres will be able to handle conditions such as mild infections, fractures and burns, and offer pathology and imaging services.

Accepting walk-ups, referrals and pre-booked appointments, the clinics will ensure vital ED resources are freed up for patients with more critical needs, taking pressure off EDs as we continue to face record levels of demand for care.

Victorian EDs are the busiest they have ever been, with presentations hitting a record 486,701 in the most recent quarter – an increase of 5.1 per cent from the previous quarter.

The new centres will help improve treatment times and reduce waiting times in EDs, while providing an alternative care pathway for non-emergency patients.

Despite record demand, our hardworking doctors and nurses are still delivering timely world-class care – with more than 99.9 per cent of Category 1 triaged patients being treated within recommended time frames.

This announcement follows a range of initiatives to deliver more care outside the hospital system, including the expansion of the Virtual ED and Better at Home program, as well as 28 state-funded GP respiratory clinics.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“This will reduce demand on our emergency departments, ensuring those that need urgent care can get it faster and avoid an unnecessary trip to the ED.”

“The global pandemic has put health systems around the country under unprecedented pressure – and this is part of our comprehensive plan to deliver the care Victorians need, when they need it, close to home.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“The former Morrison Government neglected primary care – meaning too many Victorians are ending up in an ED when they don’t need to be there. These new centres complement the other initiatives we’re delivering as part of our plan to build back a better health system.”

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