

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs



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VICTORIA DELIVERS NATION FIRST RSV PROGRAM FOR OLDER VICTORIANS

The Allan Labor Government is leading the nation in protecting older Victorians from Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) – with a free vaccine now available for residents in public sector residential aged care services.

Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt today announced the Australian-first program, which will see the Arexvy® RSV vaccine delivered to residents aged 60 and over in public and Aboriginal community-controlled aged care services.

RSV is a highly contagious respiratory virus that can affect people of all ages but can cause serious illness in older people – particularly those with existing heart or lung conditions or weakened immune systems.

The Arexvy vaccine has been shown to reduce the severity of RSV infections, including the risk of complications like pneumonia and bronchiolitis.

The \$2.2 million program complements the Labor Government's broader investment in aged care with \$34.6 million in the *Victorian Budget 2025/26* to continue delivering high-quality care in Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS) and \$7.5 million for infrastructure upgrades to improve comfort and safety for residents.

The RSV immunisation program is also supported by strong clinical guidance including from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) which recommend RSV vaccination for people aged 75 and over, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 60 and over and those with medical risk factors.

The initiative builds on the Labor Government's RSV protection program for babies and infants, which is helping shield the youngest Victorians from severe illness. In Australia, RSV is the leading cause of hospitalisation in infants, often progressing to serious conditions like pneumonia or bronchiolitis.

Mothers are also encouraged to get vaccinated during their pregnancy to help build immunity in their baby as early as possible. However, for those unable to be immunised with Abrysvo, or mums immunised less than two weeks before delivery, the Victorian-funded nirsevimab vaccine is available for babies.

Together, these nation-leading programs are helping Victorians of all ages stay healthy and out of hospital – and ensuring the state's most vulnerable residents are protected during the winter RSV peak.

For more information on RSV, visit the betterhealth.vic.gov.au/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt

"No family wants to imagine their parent or grandparent sick and this free immunisation program will keep residents of our Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services safe from serious respiratory illness caused by RSV."

"We're proud to be the first state in Australia delivering a free RSV vaccination program for residents of public sector aged care, which will help more older Victorians to stay healthy over winter."