

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Women



Sunday, 21 December 2025

## SAVE 000 AND EDS FOR EMERGENCIES THIS CHRISTMAS

As Victorians head into the Christmas and New Year break, the Allan Labor Government is reminding Victorians of the alternative care options available across the state, so they can avoid a busy emergency department.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the Richmond Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) to encourage Victorians to save Triple Zero and hospitals for emergencies only.

Open seven days a week, UCCs accept both walk-ins and bookings and are staffed by GPs and nurses who can treat a range of urgent, but not life-threatening conditions such as sprains, broken bones, cuts, and mild infections.

Delivered in partnership with the Commonwealth, the 29 original sites opened by the Victorian Government, have seen more than one million patients since 2022.

UCCs currently treat more than 7,500 people per week, with around 50 per cent of these patients saying they would have attended a hospital emergency department if a clinic was not available.

The reminder comes as the health system continues to face significant demand – with Victoria’s suite of world-class urgent care services ready to support the community day and night this summer.

The Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) and Nurse-on-Call are also available to Victorians – providing free advice, care and treatment sooner.

The VVED offers an all-hours free service where patients can get care from video emergency nurses and doctors online, freeing up Triple Zero and emergency departments for emergency cases. While Nurse-on-Call also offers 24/7 care, with registered nurses providing immediate, expert advice.

Victorians can also seek care at one of 800 pharmacies participating in the Labor Government’s Chemist Care Now program – helping people avoid an unnecessary trip to the doctor for conditions like uncomplicated UTIs or mild skin conditions.

These services are backed by significant investments, with an additional \$48.2 million delivered in the *Victorian Budget 2025/26* for nine UCCs and the Chemist Care Now program, and a massive \$437 million to expand the VVED, and make it permanent.

Victorians should call Triple Zero in emergencies, but non-urgent cases may be directed to alternative care.

For more information on Victoria’s Urgent Care Services, please visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/urgent-care-services](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/urgent-care-services).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*“During the festive season and throughout the busy summer months, Victorians should always consider using one of our world-class alternative care options like our UCCs or the VVED if their condition is not life-threatening.”*

*“I want to thank our dedicated doctors, nurses, midwives, and the entire healthcare workforce for their tireless work in 2025 – especially this time of year when they take time away from their families to care for Victorians.”*

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