

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

Sunday, 8 April, 2018

BUDGET BOOST TO HELP HOSPITALS FIGHT THE FLU THIS WINTER

Victoria's hospitals will have the support they need to fight the flu this winter, thanks to a boost for emergency departments from the Andrews Labor Government.

Premier Daniel Andrews today joined Minister for Health Jill Hennessy at the Royal Children's Hospital to announce \$50 million from the *Victorian Budget 2018/19* to help hospitals open more beds, hire more doctors and nurses and treat more patients.

Last year, Victoria experienced a horror flu season – one of the worst on record – with more than 48,000 confirmed cases of influenza and a record number of people presenting to emergency departments each day.

This early Budget funding boost will see 17 of Victoria's largest health services get the extra funding they need to plan now ahead of winter and cater for more patients presenting to emergency departments with the flu.

As part of this boost, the Royal Children's Hospital will receive money towards extra short stay capacity, so they can treat more patients, faster.

Each hospital will address their local winter demands in a range of ways that best suit their community's needs – for example, putting on more doctors and nurses, or opening more beds to treat more patients.

The Labor Government is also providing \$3.5 million to provide free flu shots for Victorian children aged six months up to five years, available from May 2018.

Despite Victoria urging Malcolm Turnbull to expand the National Immunisation Program to protect our kids – he refused to listen, leaving Victoria to once again step in and fill the gap.

This early Budget boost builds on the record funding provided in last year's Budget that saw hospitals receive \$1.67 billion to help meet demand and provide the care Victorian patients deserve.

The Labor Government's record investment is in stark contrast to Malcolm Turnbull, who continues to hold funding for Victorian hospitals hostage, with a proposed agreement that would see our state shortchanged by \$2.1 billion.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We're giving families peace of mind that if another horror flu season hits this winter, our hospitals will be ready."

"Young kids can be especially vulnerable to nasty colds and flu. It's why we've stepped in to make sure they'll be protected with free flu shots ahead of winter."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

"Our doctors, nurses and paramedics did a remarkable job last winter in the face of unprecedented demand. This year, we're making sure they have the pre-winter funding boost they need to get ahead of the game."

"Our investment will mean Victorians get the care they need. But Malcolm Turnbull needs to explain why he won't fund flu shots for kids, and why he continues to short-change our hospitals."

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