

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Friday, 1 March 2019

MAKING HOSPITALS SAFER FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES

The Andrews Labor Government is making hospitals safer for patients at risk of anaphylaxis who will now be able to carry and use their EpiPens within all Victorian hospitals.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos launched new guidelines today, which will change how patients aged 16 and over with anaphylaxis are managed, treated and cared for in Victorian hospitals.

In the past, it was common for hospital staff to take adrenaline autoinjectors – known as an EpiPen – from patients on admission. Now patients who carry an EpiPen should hold onto them throughout their hospital stay to use if they experience a severe and unexpected reaction to food or medication.

Safer Care Victoria's new Anaphylaxis Clinical Care Standard will help hospitals better recognise, respond to and manage patients with anaphylaxis, and provide consistency across the state.

Based on evidence and coronial findings, and developed with a panel of experts, clinicians and consumers, the new guidance comes with staff handouts, clinical management cards, a check list and patient/family handouts.

The number of people going to hospital with anaphylaxis is increasing by 15 per cent on average every year. Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, there were 9,328 emergency department presentations with anaphylaxis.

The Labor Government has invested nearly \$215 million to strengthen quality and safety in Victorian hospitals, including the establishment of Safer Care Victoria and the Victorian Agency for Health Information.

New laws requiring all Victorian hospitals to report cases of potentially fatal anaphylaxis came into force on 1 November.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Anaphylaxis is on the rise. More and more people are presenting to our hospitals with a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction."

"To save lives, we are making sure all hospitals are treating people at risk of anaphylaxis consistently. That means ensuring patients can carry their EpiPen and get their adrenaline as fast as possible."

"All Victorians deserve access to world class care, no matter where they live."

Quotes attributable to Safer Care Victoria CEO Euan Wallace

"The number of people going to hospital with anaphylaxis grew by 75 per cent in the four years to 2016/17. We noticed there was a big difference in how quickly patients were treated with adrenaline."

"Rapid treatment is the key to better patient outcomes, which is why we've released a suite of guidance to better identify, treat and manage patients with – or at risk of – anaphylaxis."