

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Select Committee on Temporary Migration

Inquiry into Temporary Migration

Written question on notice, 13 May 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000090

Health services provided or funded to temporary visa holders and undocumented workers since COVID-19 pandemic

Written

Question:

What health services has the Department of Health provided or funded to temporary visa holders and undocumented workers since the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020)?

Answer:

Temporary visa holders may access Medicare where they meet the definition of Australian resident in the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the Act), are eligible for treatment under a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement (RHCA), or are covered by a Ministerial order.

As part of the *National Partnership on COVID-19 Response* (the Partnership), the Australian Government has agreed to contribute 50 per cent of the costs incurred by State and Territory Governments in diagnosing and treating people, who are suspected or confirmed of having COVID-19 in their public health and hospital systems.

Funding provided to states through the Partnership are for all people who are in Australia, regardless of Medicare eligibility and a Commonwealth funding contribution will occur if a patient does not have access to travel or private health insurance.

- All State and Territory Governments have confirmed they will waive any out-of-pocket expenses for Medicare ineligible patients for COVID-19 related diagnosis and treatment; and
- Covid-19 vaccines will be free of charge for all people living in Australia.

As part of the \$2.4 billion National Health Plan to protect Australians from COVID-19, the Australian Government also has provided \$206.7million to establish up to 150 GP led Respiratory Clinics. As at 18 May 2021, 142 Respiratory Clinics remain open nationwide to assess, test and diagnose mild-to-moderate respiratory conditions. Of these, 135 are operating as Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics providing COVID-19 vaccinations to all people within the Phase 1b and 2a priority population groups. There is no cost to patients to attend the Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics regardless of Medicare eligibility or visa status.

The Australian Government encourages all visitors to Australia to have appropriate and active travel insurance or private health insurance to cover any health care costs while they are in Australia, regardless of whether it is a condition of their visa.