

Directions from Acting Chief Health Officer in accordance with emergency powers arising from declared state of emergency

Hospital Visitor Directions (No 37)

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Section 200

I, Associate Professor N. Deborah Friedman, Acting Chief Health Officer, consider it reasonably necessary to eliminate or reduce the risk to public health—and reasonably necessary to protect public health—to give the following directions pursuant to sections 200(1)(b) and (d) of the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) (PHW Act)**:

1 Preamble

- (1) The purpose of these directions is to prohibit non-essential visits and access to **hospitals** in order to limit the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (**SARS-CoV-2**) within a particularly vulnerable population.
- (2) These directions replace the **Hospital Visitor Directions (No 36)**.

2 Citation

- (1) These directions may be referred to as the **Hospital Visitor Directions (No 37)**.
- (2) A reference in any other direction to the **Hospital Visitor Directions (No 36)** is taken to be a reference to these directions.

3 Revocation

The **Hospital Visitor Directions (No 36)** are revoked at 11:59:00pm on 23 September 2021.

3A Commencement

The **Hospital Visitor Directions (No 37)** commence at 11:59:00pm on 23 September 2021 and end at 11:59:00pm on 21 October 2021.

4 Prohibition on entry

- (1) A person must not enter, or remain at, a hospital in Victoria between (and including) 11:59:00pm on 23 September 2021 and 11:59:00pm on 21 October 2021 unless:
 - (a) the person is a **patient** of the hospital; or
 - (b) the person is a **worker** in relation to the hospital, as defined in clause 5; or

- (c) the person is a visitor of a patient of the hospital; or
- (d) the person is present in an area of the hospital in respect of which an exemption under clause 6 is in force.

Note: hospitals also set visiting rules separate to these directions that may include additional requirements, conditions or restrictions that apply to visitors.

Excluded persons

(2) Despite subclause (1), a worker or a visitor to a patient, or a person referred to in subclause (1)(d) must not enter or remain at a hospital in Victoria between (and including) 11:59:00pm on 23 September 2021 and 11:59:00pm on 21 October 2021 if:

- (a) the person has been diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2, and has not yet been given, or taken to have been given, clearance from self-isolation under the **Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Directions**; or
- (b) during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, the person arrived in Australia from a place outside Australia other than a person arriving on a **quarantine-free flight** from an overseas location designated by the Australian Government as a **Green Zone Country**; or
- (c) during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, the person had known contact with a person who has been diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2; or

*Note: a person who has had known contact with a person who has been diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2 may also be required to self-quarantine under the **Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Directions**.*

- (d) the person has a temperature higher than 37.5 degrees or symptoms of acute respiratory infection; or
- (e) the person is aged under 16 years, other than in circumstances where:
 - (i) the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of **end of life** support for a patient; or
 - (ii) a patient has a life-threatening medical condition; and
 - (iii) the person aged under 16 years is a child, grandchild or sibling of the patient, or has a kinship relation to the patient; or
 - (iv) subclauses (9), (10), (13) or (14) apply; or
- (f) in the case of a visitor — the person has been tested for SARS-CoV-2 and has not yet received the results of that test.

*Note: subclause (2)(f) does not include a person who is required to be tested for SARS-CoV-2 in accordance with the requirements of the **Surveillance Testing Industry List and Requirements**.*

Hospital may permit certain excluded persons to visit

(3) Despite subclause (2), a person referred to in subclauses (2)(a) or (2)(e) may enter or remain at a hospital if:

- (a) the person is:
 - (i) the **parent, carer or guardian** of the patient, or has temporary care of the patient, and the purpose of the visit is to breastfeed the patient; or
 - (ii) a person whose presence at the hospital is for the purposes of end of life support for a patient of the hospital; or
 - (iii) an immediate family member of a patient whose medical condition is life threatening; and
- (b) the person is authorised to enter or remain at the hospital by:
 - (i) an officer of the hospital with the position of Executive Director of Nursing or equivalent; and
 - (ii) the Chief Health Officer or Deputy Chief Health Officer.

*Note: a person who has been diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2 and has not yet been given, or taken to have been given, clearance from self-isolation under the **Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Directions** may be authorised to visit the hospital under this subclause. Such authorisation has to be given by the hospital and the Chief Health Officer or the Deputy Chief Health Officer, and can be subject to conditions: see subclause (6).*

- (4) Despite subclause (2), a person referred to in subclauses (2)(b), (c) or (d) may enter or remain at a hospital if:

- (a) the person is:
 - (i) the parent, carer or guardian of the patient, or has temporary care of the patient; or
 - (ii) the partner or support person of a pregnant patient of the hospital, and the purpose of the visit is to attend the birth of the patient's child; or
 - (iii) a person whose presence at the hospital is for the purposes of end of life support for a patient of the hospital; or
 - (iv) an immediate family member of a patient whose medical condition is life threatening; and
- (b) the person is authorised to enter or remain at the hospital by an officer of the hospital with the position of Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery or equivalent.

Note: a hospital may determine whether it will allow a person who has been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2, who has recently arrived from overseas or who has been tested for SARS-CoV-2 and has not yet received the results of their test to visit the hospital in certain specified circumstances, and what conditions it will impose on such visits.

- (5) A person permitted to enter or remain at a hospital under subclause (4) must comply with any directions or conditions imposed in relation to their visit by the officer of the hospital who authorised their visit under subclause (4)(b).

- (6) A person permitted to enter or remain at a hospital under subclause (3) must comply with any directions or conditions imposed in relation to their visit by either or both of:
 - (a) the officer of the hospital who authorised their visit under subclause (3)(b)(i); and
 - (b) the Chief Health Officer or the Deputy Chief Health Officer.
- (7) An officer of the hospital referred to in subclause (3)(b)(i) or subclause (4)(b) as the case may be, must keep, in relation to each person to whom they give authorisation under that subclause, a record of:
 - (a) the contact details of the person; and
 - (b) the date and time at which that person entered and left the hospital, for at least 28 days from the day the authorisation is given.

Restrictions on visitors of patients (end of life support including life-threatening conditions)

- (8) Where a visitor under subclause (1)(c) is visiting for the purposes of providing end of life support to a patient, the **operator** of a hospital in Victoria must not permit more than two visitors of a patient to enter or remain on the premises at any one time in relation to that patient.
- (9) Where a visitor under subclause (1)(c) is visiting for the purposes of providing end of life support to a patient, and is a carer, parent or guardian of a child or dependant, and they cannot access alternative care arrangements (whether on a paid or voluntary basis) or leave their child or dependent unattended so that they can attend the hospital without the child or dependent, then the child or dependent may accompany that person when attending the hospital, and the cap in subclause (8) will not include that child or dependent.
- (10) Where a child or dependent visitor under subclause (1)(c) is visiting and the patient is the carer, parent or guardian of that child or dependent visitor, and the patient cannot access alternative care arrangements (whether on a paid or voluntary basis) or leave their child or dependent visitor unattended so that they can be present at the hospital without their child or dependent visitor, then their child or dependent visitor may be present at the hospital, and the cap in subclause (8) will not include that child or dependent visitor.

Note: the definition of end of life support includes where a patient is at risk of dying from a sudden acute event (life-threatening condition).

Restrictions on visitors of patients (other)

- (11) A person may visit a patient in a hospital if:
 - (a) the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of providing essential care and support necessary for the patient's immediate emotional or physical wellbeing (including mental health support and support for people living with dementia); or

- (b) in the case of a patient of the hospital aged under 18 years – the person is the parent or guardian of the patient or has temporary care of the patient; or
 - (c) in the case of a patient of the hospital who has a mental illness or is living with dementia – the person is the patient's **nominated person** and the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of matters relating to their role as nominated person; or
 - (d) the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of providing interpreter or informal language support to enable the delivery of care by workers at the hospital; or
 - (e) the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of the person learning to support the patient's care upon the patient's discharge; or
 - (f) in the case of a pregnant patient of the hospital whose status as a patient relates to the pregnancy – the person is the patient's partner or support person; or
 - (g) in the case of a patient of the hospital who is in a maternity ward whose status as a patient relates to pregnancy or childbirth – the person is the patient's partner or support person; or
 - (h) in the case of a patient of the hospital attending at the hospital's emergency department – the person is accompanying the patient; or
 - (i) in the case of a patient of the hospital attending an outpatient appointment – the person is accompanying the patient.
- (12) Where a visitor under subclause (1)(c) is visiting for a purpose specified in subclause (11), the operator of a hospital in Victoria must not permit:
- (a) more than two visitors of a patient to enter or remain on the premises at any one time in relation to that patient; and
 - (b) more than two visitors of a patient to enter or remain on the premises per day in relation to that patient.
- (13) Where a visitor under subclause (1)(c) is visiting for a purpose specified in subclause (11), and is a carer, parent or guardian of a child or dependant, and they cannot access alternative care arrangements (whether on a paid or voluntary basis) or leave their child or dependent unattended so that they can attend the hospital without the child or dependent, then the child or dependent may accompany that person when attending the hospital, and the caps in subclauses (12)(a) and (12)(b) will not include that child or dependent.
- (14) Where a child or dependent visitor under subclause (1)(c) is visiting for a purpose specified in subclause (11), and the patient is the carer, parent or guardian of that child or dependant visitor, and the patient cannot access alternative care arrangements (whether on a paid or voluntary basis) or leave their child or dependent visitor unattended so that they can be present at the hospital without their child or dependent visitor, then their child visitor or dependent visitor may be present at the hospital, and the caps in subclauses (12)(a) and (12)(b) will not include that child or dependent visitor.

Transitional provision – excluded persons exemption

- (15) An authorisation granted to an excluded person to enter or remain at a hospital under any **Revoked Hospital Visitor Directions** continues to have effect, until the validity period expires under the authorisation.
- (16) A request for exemption to authorise an excluded person to enter or remain at a hospital made under any Revoked Hospital Visitor Directions continues to have effect.

5 Definition of worker

- (1) A person is a **worker** in relation to a hospital if:
 - (a) the person is an employee or **contractor** of the hospital or a student under the supervision of an employee or contractor of the hospital; or
 - (b) the person's presence at the hospital:
 - (i) is for the purposes of providing health, medical or pharmaceutical goods or services to a patient of the hospital, whether the goods or services are provided for consideration or on a voluntary basis; and
 - (ii) has been arranged by appointment in advance; and
 - (iii) is approved by an officer of the hospital with the position of Chief Medical Officer, Chief Operating Officer, or equivalent; or
 - (c) the person is a **disability worker** and the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of providing a **disability service** to a patient with a **disability**; or
 - (d) the person's presence at the hospital is for the purposes of providing goods or services that are necessary for the effective operation of the hospital, whether the goods or services are provided for consideration or on a voluntary basis; or
 - Note: union and employer representatives are covered by this subclause (d).*
 - (e) the person's presence at the hospital is authorised or required for the purposes of emergency management, law enforcement, or the performance of a duty, function or power under a law.

6 Exemption power

- (1) The Chief Health Officer or the Deputy Chief Health Officer may, in writing, grant an exemption from these directions in respect of a specified area of a hospital if the Chief Health Officer or the Deputy Chief Health Officer, as the case requires, is satisfied, having regard to the need to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, that an exemption is appropriate due to:
 - (a) the nature of the area; or

- (b) the existing limits on the number of people that may be present in the area (whether because of the operation of a direction under the PHW Act, or otherwise).

Transitional provision – area exemption

- (2) Any **area exemption** granted under any Revoked Hospital Visitor Directions continues to have effect.
- (3) Any application for an area exemption under any Revoked Hospital Visitor Directions continues to have effect.

7 Operator obligations

Operator to take all reasonable steps

- (1) The operator of a hospital in Victoria must take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - (a) a person does not enter or remain on the premises of the hospital if the person is prohibited from doing so by clause 4; and
 - (b) a record is kept, in relation to each person who enters or remains at the hospital as a visitor under these directions of:
 - (i) the contact details of the person; and
 - (ii) the date and time at which that person entered and left the hospital,for at least 28 days from the day of the entry; and
 - (c) the hospital facilitates telephone, video or other means of electronic communication with the parents, guardians, partners, carers and support persons of patients to support the physical, emotional and social wellbeing (including mental health) of patients.

8 Definitions

For the purposes of these directions:

- (1) **area exemption** means an exemption granted by the Chief Health Officer or the Deputy Chief Health Officer under clause 6(1) of these directions or the equivalent provision in any **Revoked Hospital Visitor Directions**;
- (2) **contractor** in relation to a **hospital** means a person engaged as a contractor by the **operator** of the hospital in relation to the provision of health, medical or pharmaceutical services by the hospital;

Examples: visiting medical officers, locum doctors.

- (3) **Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Directions** means the **Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Directions (No 27)** as amended or replaced from time to time;
- (4) **end of life** in relation to a **patient**:
 - (a) means a situation where the patient's death is expected within days (including periods of 28 days or less), or where the patient, with or

without existing conditions, is at risk of dying from a sudden acute event;

- (b) does not mean a situation where a patient has an advanced, progressive, incurable condition, or general frailty and co-existing conditions, that mean that the patient is expected to die within 12 months (except where the situation also falls within subclause (a));
- (5) **Green Zone Country** has the same meaning as in the **Victorian Border Crossing Permit Directions (No 32)** as amended or replaced from time to time;
- (6) **hospital** means:
 - (a) a **public hospital**;
 - (b) a **denominational hospital**;
 - (c) a **multi-purpose service**;
 - (d) a **private hospital**;
 - (e) a **day procedure centre**;
- (7) **nominated person** in relation to a **patient** has the same meaning as in the **Mental Health Act 2014**;
- (8) **operator** of a **hospital** means a person who owns, controls or operates the hospital;
- (9) **parent, carer or guardian** in relation to a **patient** aged under 18 means an adult in a significant primary caring role, including biological, adoptive, or foster parents, kinship carers, step-parents and legal guardians;
- (10) **patient** of a **hospital** means a person who requests or is being provided with health, medical or pharmaceutical services by the hospital;
- (11) **quarantine-free flight** means a flight where no passenger on board is required to quarantine as a result of having been outside an Australian Government designated **Green Zone Country** in the 14 days prior to arrival in Victoria;
- (12) **Revoked Hospital Visitor Directions** means any of the previous Hospital Visitor Directions, as amended or replaced from time to time, which are no longer in force;
- (13) **Surveillance Testing Industry List and Requirements** has the same meaning as in the **Workplace (Additional Industry Obligations) Directions**;
- (14) **worker** in relation to a hospital has the meaning given to it in clause 5;
- (15) **Workplace (Additional Industry Obligations) Directions** means the **Workplace (Additional Industry Obligations) Directions (No 46)** as amended or replaced from time to time;
- (16) the following expressions have the same meaning that they have in the **Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018**:
 - (a) **disability**;

- (b) **disability service;**
 - (c) **disability worker;**
- (17) the following expressions have the same meanings as they have in the **Health Services Act 1988:**
- (a) **day procedure centre;**
 - (b) **denominational hospital;**
 - (c) **multi-purpose service;**
 - (d) **public hospital;**
 - (e) **private hospital.**

9 Penalties

Section 203 of the PHW Act provides:

Compliance with direction or other requirement

- (1) A person must not refuse or fail to comply with a direction given to the person, or a requirement made of the person, in the exercise of a power under an authorisation given under section 199.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units;
In the case of a body corporate, 600 penalty units.

- (2) A person is not guilty of an offence against subsection (1) if the person had a reasonable excuse for refusing or failing to comply with the direction or requirement.

Note: section 209 of the PHW Act provides for infringement notices to be served on any person who has refused or failed to comply with a direction given to the person, or a requirement made of the person, in the exercise of a power under an authorisation given under section 199. The amount payable pursuant to the infringement notice varies depending on the nature of the failure or refusal and the age of the person.



Associate Professor N. Deborah Friedman

Acting Chief Health Officer, as authorised to exercise emergency powers under section 199(2)(a) of the PHW Act.

23 September 2021