

Media Release

College of Surgeons supports mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for healthcare workers

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) supports mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for the entire healthcare workforce in clinical and non-clinical positions.

“We appreciate that healthcare workers have been at the forefront of population-wide immunisation. They were among the first to get vaccinated during this pandemic while delivering front line services. As the highly contagious Delta variant drives a new surge of cases, vaccination is an ethical obligation and a necessary step for all healthcare workers to protect themselves, their colleagues, and the community they treat,” said RACS President Dr Sally Langley.

The College stated that the evidence on the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines is overwhelming and the vaccines are one of the best tools available to end the pandemic.

“It is crucial that all healthcare facilities create a strong COVID safe environment. The community seeking care have an expectation that all staff working in these facilities have been vaccinated.

“Healthcare workers have a duty to maintain the highest standards in terms of infection control, ensuring they meet infection control and social distancing requirements in clinical and social settings. During a COVID surge, surgeons should limit their movement between hospitals where possible and convert as many consultations to telehealth as possible dependent on clinical safety.

“Where personal circumstances mean it is not possible to be vaccinated, individual healthcare workers should seek medical advice to ensure that they remain adequately protected.

“We urge all people to get fully immunised and address any questions or concerns they may have about vaccine safety to a healthcare professional,” added Dr Langley.

The College also called on governments and healthcare providers to continue supporting vaccine rollout programs in areas of need to ensure equity of access.

“All levels of government should implement strategies that decrease barriers to accessing vaccines, improve vaccine acceptance and support and address vaccine hesitancy to achieve a high rate of vaccination among the community and healthcare workers.

“The health and safety of our communities, families and nations depend on us taking the necessary steps to protect ourselves to better protect them,” said Dr Langley.

Ends.

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About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery. www.surgeons.org