MEDIA RELEASE

New helpline for health services

25 June 2021

As Victoria gets back to 'COVID normal', Victorians will be relying on its health services more than ever to keep them healthy, while maintaining a COVID safe environment.

To help with this, Victorian health services – Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, general practices and pharmacies - can now access a free infection prevention helpline on 1800 312 968 to help them keep their patients and staff safe.

The new service has been established by Murray PHN on behalf of Victoria's six Primary Health Networks (PHNs), with funding from the Victorian Department of Health.

Expertise and oversight are being provided by representatives from The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, a pharmacy consultant, infection prevention control specialist and a practice nurse.

PHNs across Australia have played a vital role in supporting primary health care services during the pandemic, helping to ensure ongoing access to primary care services for their communities.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said it was well documented that COVID-19 had led to lower or delayed health prevention activities and screening in general practice and other primary health care services.

"Local health services have been fantastic in their response and application of COVID-safe practices," he said. "But infection prevention control is a continuous cycle, and minimising risk is key to ensuring the safe return to face-to-face care."

Registered nurses from the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) who are skilled in infection prevention and control practices and supported by credentialled infection prevention and control specialists, are answering the calls to the helpline.

APNA CEO Ken Griffin said it could be challenging for health services to know where to go and what information to seek out with a constantly evolving and complex list of available information, guidelines and advice.

"When health services call the helpline, they can expect to receive evidence-based guidance, and individualised help with identifying priority areas for action, pandemic action plans or risk-management frameworks that help to improve infection control processes," he said.

The free 1800 312 968 helpline is available 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday. To learn more about the program you can also visit vtphna.org.au/infection-prevention-helpline

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Leadership   Collaboration   Knowledge   Innovation   Accountability

2021 images of Matt Jones

- https://www.murrayphn.org.au/murray-phn-ceo_matt-jones_2021/
- https://www.murrayphn.org.au/murray-phn-ceo_matt-jones_2_2021/