



COVID-19 Vaccination Champions Program

Information about the program

OFFICIAL

Background

The Victorian Department of Health (DH) has established a COVID-19 Vaccine - Vaccination Champions program, which aims to increase vaccine confidence, increase uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations and other COVID Safe Behaviours, and raise awareness of Victoria's easy to access COVID-19 vaccination program, that provides appropriate access for priority populations.

Providing timely, accurate, scientific-based, evidence-informed and factual information to the vaccine hesitant population is key to achieving high vaccination rates and in turn reducing COVID-19 related harm by preventing serious illness and death, and, as much as possible, disease transmission.

Traditional information campaigns or vaccine promotion strategies are unlikely to be effective in isolation. The specific concerns of community members must be sought and acknowledged, and key opinion leaders need to be meaningfully engaged and empowered to advocate for vaccines.

One-on-one conversations will be key to addressing vaccine hesitancy and encouraging community members to book and attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

Objectives

- Raise awareness of the roll-out of the Australian Government's COVID-19 immunisation program in Victoria
- Engage vulnerable communities on the COVID-19 immunisation program
- Provide credible information and respond to issues, concerns or queries
- Increase vaccine confidence by providing reliable information through trustworthy sources
- Reduce barriers to uptake by receiving feedback from the community to inform planning and decision-making

Who are the champions?

All champions have received training conducted by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) on *How to build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines*. Additionally, DH provide regular updates and ongoing support to ensure all champions are equipped and confident to present information to the broader community.

Champions have been grouped into three cohorts:

- Clinical
- Community & Faith
- Industry & Workplace

Clinical champions

Trusted members of the community from clinical backgrounds who are comfortable and confident to:

- Share information and messages

- Answer questions
- Discuss risks and clinical concerns regarding the COVID-19 vaccination program

Community & Faith champions

- Representatives from CALD communities and groups impacted by COVID
- Faith leaders
- ACCHO representatives who do not consider themselves clinical
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives
- Other community representatives

Industry & Workplace champions

Representatives from high-risk industries and workplaces who are confident to present information and facilitate sessions within their own organisational settings. These champions are not expected to present at events that are external to their workplaces or industry.

The role of a champion

Vaccine champions may:

- Deliver presentations and facilitate group and individual discussions on COVID-19 vaccination.
- Attend and participate in discussions at 'on-the-ground' engagement sessions in collaboration with grant recipients, Local Public Health Units or at events organised by DH e.g. at community events, pop-up clinics etc.
- Tell personal stories about your experience getting vaccinated and why you chose to get vaccinated.

What are the intended outcomes of the program?

- Improved vaccine health literacy among the community, including COVID Safe Behaviours
- Increased public trust in vaccine quality and safety.
- Clear, credible, and trustworthy information provided
- Widespread motivation within the community to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it's available based on positive perceptions of convenience, affordability, effectiveness, safety, importance, and necessity.
- COVID-19 related harm reduced by immunisation preventing serious illness and death, and, as much as possible, disease transmission.

How to request a champion for your event

If you are coordinating an event to increase vaccine confidence and would like to engage one or more champions to assist, please complete the champions request form and email it to:

vaccine.champions@health.vic.gov.au. One of the Engagement and Partnerships team will contact you to provide further information.

To receive this document in another format, phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email COVIDvaccination@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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