

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **First Gold Coast patients in Phase 1b receive their GP COVID-19 vaccinations**

The first patients on the Gold Coast are today receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations through their local GP, as Phase 1b of the rollout begins through general practices, Aboriginal Community Health Centres and GP led respiratory clinics.

Phase 1b is for the over 70's, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders over 55, adults with a specified medical condition, healthcare workers and critical high-risk workers.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network (GCPHN) Board Chair and local GP, Dr Roger Halliwell, said GCPHN has been working to support practices get ready for this next phase, and will continue to work with other practices as they come online.

"The rollout was a staged approach with 31 GP clinics starting this week increasing to a total of 122 Gold Coast GP practices coming on board in the next four weeks," Dr Halliwell said.

"Practices have received many inquiries about booking in for their vaccination, and while we are heartened by the level of interest, we ask that residents be patient as bookings may not yet be available, as we are in the very beginning stages of Phase 1b and expect the program to ramp up in the next four weeks.

"If you are an existing patient at a GP practice involved in the vaccination program, then you may be contacted by your practice, when it is timely, about booking your vaccination.

"We encourage all residents, before contacting your GP, to check if you are eligible for this current phase using the Australian Government's Vaccine Eligibility Checker. (<https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au>)

"If you are eligible, you will be able to view vaccination clinics and book an appointment online or via phone, but please note that bookings will not be available for all practices yet, until they have been onboarded as part of the program. We expect all practices who are part of the program, to be fully vaccinating by mid-April.

"If you prefer not to use the online option, you can call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 1800 020 080," Dr Halliwell said.

Patients that don't have a regular GP or a Medicare card can visit GP respiratory clinics at Hope Island, Upper Coomera, Burleigh and Nerang. Booking details of these clinics will be available via the eligibility checker, as they come online.

Vaccination services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community can be through a local GP, Kalwun health clinics and by early next month, at the Kalwun/Nerang respiratory clinic.

GCPHN Board member and GP, Dr Lisa Beecham, said the vaccination program would be available for all eligible Australians.

“Given this vaccination program will be running for the next few months, there are things you can do while you wait for your vaccination appointment,” Dr Beecham said.

“You can make sure your Medicare details are correct, continue to practice good hygiene, physical distancing and adhere to local restrictions and get tested if you are unwell.”

The Australian Government Department of Health website ([www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/when-will-i-get-a-covid-19-vaccine](http://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/when-will-i-get-a-covid-19-vaccine)) also has accurate, evidence-based answers to questions about COVID-19 vaccines, and information is also available in a range of languages. (<https://covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines>)

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