

Successful COVID vaccine communication: critical to rebuilding public trust

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‘Rebuilding public trust in the COVID-19 vaccination program is critical to addressing the pandemic and its impacts,’ says John Gregg, Chief Executive, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA).

Today, the AHHA has released a set of [guiding principles](#) to support governments, the health and community sectors and media to reorient their approach to COVID-19 vaccine communication to re-establish public trust and move towards a person-centred approach.

The principles statement developed in partnership with AHHA members from across the health sector, calls for government to rebuild trust and re-engage communities through clear, concise and consistent messaging.

‘Members of the community have become disengaged from current COVID vaccine communication, and it is critical to the success of the vaccine program that we address this.

‘Government communication must be accessible and equitable. Communications materials should be co-developed with community leaders, health experts and all levels of government, and tailored to Australia’s diverse population.

‘A single body should be established and promoted as the national coordination point for trusted accurate sources of information and advice.

‘The inclusion of community members, health and social care providers in mass vaccination strategies is necessary to improve ease of access and achieve high uptake of vaccines across all population groups. The experience of getting vaccinated should be simple and efficient.

‘Media must fulfil their social responsibility by accurately reporting and providing context when covering health issues related to COVID-19 vaccines. Importantly, misinformation and anti-vaccine content should not be acknowledged,’ says Mr Gregg.

Many of the gaps we have witnessed in the current communication were identified as areas of improvement in the [review of the health sector’s response to the H1N1 pandemic](#) in 2009. This principles statement offers government, health and community sectors and media guidance to deliver clear and effective communication that will support the delivery of a successful vaccine program.

[AHHA’s Principle Statement on COVID-19 Vaccination Program Communication and Engagement](#) is available [online](#). More information on AHHA is available at ahha.asn.au. This media release is available [online](#).

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit hospitals, Primary Health Networks, and community and primary healthcare services.