

Head Office

PO Box 255, Parramatta NSW 2124

T 02 8844 0400**F** 02 8844 0499**E** aca@chiropractors.asn.auchiropractors.asn.au

15 September 2020

The Hon Daniel Andrews
Premier of Victoria
Level 1, 1 Treasury Place
East Melbourne, VIC 3002

Via email: daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Premier,

Re: Reopening allied health in Metropolitan Melbourne

I am writing to you on behalf of the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) to urge your Government to ease Stage 4 restrictions in metropolitan Melbourne so chiropractors and other allied health practitioners can resume caring for all patients in need, not just those with the most urgent or acute needs.

Last week, the Government you lead urged all Victorians with a pre-existing medical condition requiring regular treatment from a health professional, to continue with their usual management plan as this is vital to protect their health and avoid unnecessary hospitalisation¹.

The Health Minister, Jenny Mikakos said:

“Any delays in seeking help only lead to worse patient outcomes and potentially more time in hospital for Victorians. Seeking help early keeps you and your family safe and eases pressure on our hospital system.”

Despite this, in areas where Stage 4 restrictions apply, chiropractors and other allied health practitioners such as physiotherapists, osteopaths and podiatrists can only care for patients if the absence of, or delay of this care, results in such a significant change or deterioration in the patient's functional independence that this necessitates an escalation of care.

This has meant chiropractors in metropolitan Melbourne have had to turn away almost all patients seeking their care. This would seem to be the exact opposite of the advice given to all Victorians last week by your Government.

Chiropractors should be able to provide timely care to all patients in need, including in metropolitan Melbourne. Like all allied health practitioners, chiropractic practices have implemented a raft of

¹ <https://www.jennymikakos.com.au/media-releases/hospitals-ready-and-waiting-to-support-all-victorians/>

mandatory COVIDSafe measures to keep patients and staff safe including physical distancing and new personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection control procedures.

The ACA understands that Stage 4 restrictions were designed to align to Victoria's current State of Emergency and State of Disaster declarations and to save and protect lives by restricting non-essential movement across metropolitan Melbourne.

We also appreciate that there is no rule book for Coronavirus (COVID-19) and that health authorities everywhere are still learning about this virus every single day and grappling with how to respond appropriately. Victoria has effectively managed to reduce daily new case numbers from almost 700 at the beginning of August to just 35 today.

Like other allied health organisations however, the ACA is concerned that if restrictions remain at current levels, this will create unnecessary health risks for those patients who require care but are not currently allowed to access allied health services.

I urge you to listen to the voice of Victorian allied health professionals and allow them to safely provide the care they are trained and qualified to deliver to every patient in need, not just those with urgent or acute care needs.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AC', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Anthony Coxon

President

Australian Chiropractors Association