



22 October 2021

The Hon. Martin Foley
Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services and Minister for the Co-ordination of
Health and Human Services COVID-19
Level 22/50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3001

By Email Only: minister.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Dear Health Minister

HOSPITAL SURGE SUPPORT ALLOWANCE – NEPT WORKERS

We write to you in relation to the announcement on 12 October 2021 of the implementation of a Hospital Surge Support Allowance (**HSSA**) for patient-facing healthcare workers who provide direct care in public hospital services and Ambulance Victoria.

As the registered union for Non-Emergency Patient Transport (**NEPT**) officers the Ambulance Employees Australia Victoria (**AEAV**) is disappointed to see that the private NEPT workers are excluded from the program. The NEPT sector is integral to the functionality of the health system and will continue to be a key component of the health systems response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEPT officers' duties have not only changed significantly during the pandemic response, but their exposure to risk has significantly increased as a result of their direct contact with large numbers of COVID-19 positive patients. Some crews report transporting up to five COVID-19 positive patients in a single shift.

In addition to COVID-19 cases changing the nature of NEPT work, changes to the dispatch grid have also meant that NEPT officers are required to attend more emergency cases. This is also a change to their role as a result of the pandemic.

For the above reasons we ask that the Victorian Government consider options to show the appreciation of the government and the Victorian public for the critical role that NEPT workers play in Victoria's pandemic response.

The coming months are expected to be very challenging for the health sector. We have already seen the pandemic have an impact of the stress levels and morale of our NEPT members. The AEAV are concerned that a failure to adequately recognise the contribution of these workers to the overall response may lead to unnecessary resignations, putting further strain on the system.

We respectfully request a response by close of business Friday **5 November 2021**. Should you have any questions in relation to this request, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0419 317 289.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brett Adie', written in a cursive style.

Brett Adie
Secretary
Ambulance Employees Australia Victoria (AEAV)