



MEDIA RELEASE

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CHA WELCOMES TEST AND ISOLATE PAYMENT BUT RESPONSE TIMES NEED TO BE QUICKER

Australia's largest non-government grouping of hospitals, aged and community care services says the introduction of payments for people who have to get tested and are forced to isolate is a step in the right direction but that testing response times need to come down.

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) says anything that the State Government can do to support people and control the pandemic is a win-win.

CHA Director of Health Policy James Kemp said: "Access to this payment will give many people enough support and peace of mind to be able to go and get tested. But we also need to consider whether a one-off payment is enough when people are waiting up to 5 days or more for their test results.

"We shouldn't expect people who are living pay cheque to pay cheque to risk up to a week of wages in order to get a test.

"The only way the payment will work is if people can rely on receiving their test results quickly, and if they are negative, get back to work within 24 or 48 hours.

"And if they are waiting more than 48 hours, they need to be supported to stay at home and isolate, not left in limbo.

"A payment system that pays people for every day they are required to stay home and isolate after a test is a much more responsible way to structure support payments."

CHA is also calling on NSW Health to expand the reporting of its testing data to provide information on those people who have received their result within 24 hours and those who have had to wait over 48 and 72 hours.

Mr Kemp explained: "Alongside the daily COVID numbers, we need to start hearing how long it is taking for people to receive their results. Shining some light on these figures might actually help to make sure that people aren't waiting too long to receive their results.

"Good health policy is based not just on good data but the best data available. NSW Health is running as fast as it can to keep up with COVID's hectic pace and we acknowledge the hard work of the state's testing and tracing workforce. We would welcome the reporting of extra data so that we can get a more accurate picture of how we are tracking."



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Note to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 percent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.