



26 October 2021

## **Media Statement**

### **Covid vax exemptions limited says regulator**

The Medical Council of NSW is concerned about reports that doctors are being pressured to sign off on exemptions from Covid-19 vaccinations, by patients who are vaccine hesitant or are opposed to vaccination.

The state's medical professional regulator says the exemptions can only be issued by a doctor if the patient meets a specific health contraindication included in Australian Technical Advisory Group's (ATAGI) clinical guidance.

The Medical Council's president, Dr John Sammut said today, "A Covid-19 vaccination exemption is strictly limited and must be related to a health contraindication for which evidence is required to ensure a doctor is satisfied and can appropriately sign an exemption."

A NSW doctor who signs a Covid-19 vaccination exemption for a patient who is not eligible faces the risk of a complaint to the Medical Council and potential regulatory action.

The Council has published [an article](#) for NSW medical practitioners, so they are aware of the strict criteria for exemptions, and to encourage them to actively engage with patients who are vaccine hesitant.

#### **Background**

The Medical Council works in collaboration with the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) to receive and manage complaints about registered doctors and medical students in NSW. The Council's paramount legal obligation is to protect the public. It deals with doctors whose conduct, performance or health may present a risk to the public.

We do this by assessing complaints, promoting compliance with professional standards and delivering programs to ensure doctors provide safe care to their patients.

**Please attribute to a spokesperson for the Medical Council of NSW.**