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MEDIA RELEASE

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\$100M SUPPORT FOR HEALTH WORKERS TO FIGHT COVID-19

NSW frontline healthcare workers will be provided with free accommodation to protect their loved ones as part of \$100 million in extra measures to support frontline staff battling COVID-19.

The NSW Government is allocating almost \$60 million to provide doctors, nurses, paramedics and other hospital and ambulance staff with the option of staying in out-of-home accommodation during the pandemic.

The package will also support medical research and vaccine trials to beat COVID-19, as well as commercialise research products and boost domestic supply chains.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian said this funding would not only provide support for healthcare workers now but would also give them the resources to tackle COVID-19 head-on in the coming months.

“Nobody should go to work and worry that it will put their families at risk especially when they are working so hard to protect us. This funding is the least we can do to keep healthcare workers and their families safe,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“Our health professionals are among the best in the world and we must do everything we can to help them not just now but also in the weeks and months ahead as we battle this virus.”

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said providing free accommodation to hospital staff was a crucial plank in the health support package.

“The last thing the brave men and women in our health system should have to worry about is that their jobs will result in their loved ones being exposed to this virus,” Mr Perrottet said.

“As was the case during the bushfires our health system will have all the resources it needs so our frontline health workers can save lives and look after themselves.”

Local health districts will work with staff to make sure accommodation is close to work or their families, depending on individual needs.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard said no stone would be left unturned when it came to supporting the health system. Mr Hazzard said the vital health package will also include \$25 million in funding for medical research and vaccine trials to help develop a cure to beat COVID-19 as well as \$11 million to quickly get work from NSW’s world class universities and partner research institutions to market.

“Frontline health staff who have the community’s back now know that the community and the government have their back. This funding gives them options on accommodation when they’re doing

battle with COVID-19,” Mr Hazzard said.

“Options to protect their family and to protect themselves are critical, and now they can choose what’s best in their own circumstances without worrying about a drain on their budget.”

The package also includes \$10 million to work with NSW engineering, electrical and manufacturing businesses to urgently undertake pilot projects to produce ventilators and other critical medical equipment locally.

Key elements of the support package include:

- \$58 million for health worker accommodation
- \$25 million for medical research and vaccine trials
- \$11 million for commercialisation of research products
- \$10 million Funding to partner with industry to boost domestic supply chains.

The NSW Government has already committed \$700 million extra funding for NSW Health as part of a \$2.3 billion health boost and economic stimulus package announced on March 17.

This funding boost is helping double ICU capacity, preparing for additional COVID-19 testing, purchasing additional ventilators and medical equipment and establishing acute respiratory clinics.

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