

# GP Connect

Keeping GPs informed in the changing primary health landscape



4 March 2020

## Supporting GPs to respond to COVID-19

WA Primary Health Alliance, the AMA (WA) and RACGP WA are working to represent general practice as part of Western Australia's response to COVID-19. We met on Wednesday 4 March with the Department of Health WA to articulate the important role that general practice plays and how we can work together to support the health system over the coming weeks and months. There was agreement to meet weekly around joint planning, engagement and support for general practice and primary care.

We are meeting today with the AMA (WA), RACGP WA, Rural Health West and St John Ambulance to address critical issues with respect to PPE and advice for general practice. Further advice will follow around the outcomes of our discussion.

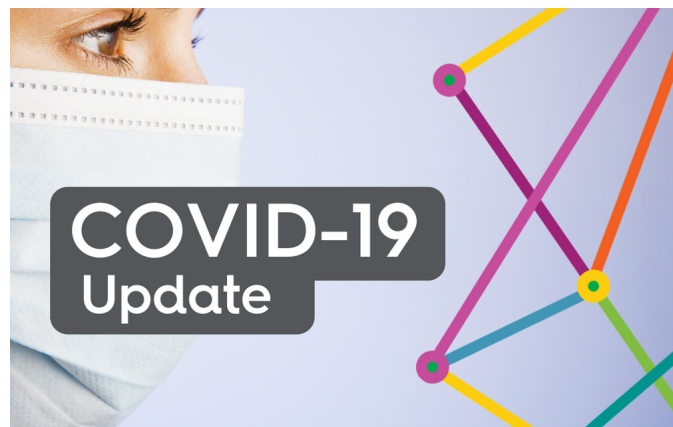
We have also been asked to participate in a Primary Care COVID-19 preparedness meeting on Friday in Canberra, chaired by the Australian Government Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy.

We understand the need to ensure the safest possible environment for the primary care workforce – your health and wellbeing is our priority.

Please be assured we are working collaboratively with the Australian Government Department of Health, AMA (WA), RACGP WA, Rural Health West, St John Ambulance and The Department of Health WA to support the work of general practice.

### Is your practice prepared for COVID-19?

Following are some practical considerations to help you prepare your practice:



- Consider what signage you want to display on the door advising patients how you would like them to proceed if they suspect they are at risk of COVID-19. Visit [HealthPathways WA](https://www.healthpathways.wa.gov.au) for links to resources for GPs
- Make sure your workplace is clean and hygienic. Clear unessential objects, like magazines, from surfaces (reception desk, desks and tables)
- Provide sanitising hand rub in prominent places
- Display posters promoting handwashing
- Identify a room you can use should you need to isolate a suspected case
- Check your stock of cleaning products and clarify the procedure for cleaning the room after use
- Review your practice cleaning schedule and add regular cleaning of door handles
- Brief all practice staff on your preferred management of cases and messaging for patients

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## Supporting GPs to respond to COVID-19 (cont)

- Have a return to work plan for staff, if they are travelling overseas. This could include them making contact with you for the [latest advice](#) before they return to work
- Visit [HealthPathways WA](#) for links to the latest Department of Health WA, Australian Government Department of Health and World Health Organization advice
- Identify your closest PathWest COVID-19 collection site, if you don't have the necessary PPE to test patients
- Start to consider contingency and business continuity plans, in the event of an outbreak in your community
- Ensure practice staff know how to don and doff appropriate PPE. [This RACGP poster](#) may be helpful.

### Latest WA Health update

[Clinical Alert #11 General Practitioners. Monday 2 March 2020](#)

### Mask usage and distribution update

Given the ongoing national shortage of masks, please ensure you and your colleagues are aware of the information below.

#### Surgical masks

These are intended for single use by health professionals and patients, only when dealing with patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of Coronavirus. They are not intended for wider use, such as in waiting rooms, or to be given to other patients.

Complete this [online form](#) to apply for a stock of masks and allow us to assess your request.

#### N95 masks

These must only be used when medically managing a patient with severe pneumonia meeting the case definition for COVID-19, while awaiting transport to hospital, with one mask worn by the treating GP/ health professional, and the other by the patient.

Given the extremely limited supply, each practice can only be supplied with two N95 masks, if they have a stock level of less than 10 masks.



Primary Health Liaisons delivering masks to practices.

Complete this [General practice confirmation of N95 mask requirement online form](#), even if you don't need or want to receive masks, to ensure we have an accurate record of requests.

We will then advise you of your allocation and confirm the method of distribution. If we do not hear from you by Friday 20 March, we will assume you do not require N95 masks.

If you deplete your stock by having to medically manage a patient with severe pneumonia meeting the case definition, you can request a further allocation.

Complete this [N95 mask reorder online form](#) and your request will be considered from 25 March onwards, if stocks have not already been exhausted.

### Further information

You can contact your WA Primary Health Alliance, Primary Health Liaison, or Practice Assist on 1800 227 747 or [practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au) for further assistance.

For up to date information, please access the [HealthPathways WA](#) site. If required, email [healthpathways@wapha.org.au](mailto:healthpathways@wapha.org.au) for log on details.

Department of Health WA has regularly updated information for health professionals which is available at [https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus)

## GP Hospital Liason Updates

### Royal Perth Hospital GP Notify Fax also available by email

Is your practice receiving GP Notify by fax but would prefer email? GP Notify is an automated notification system that informs the patient's nominated GP (where registered) of patient admission, discharge and death at Royal Perth Hospital by email or fax.

A technical issue led to all new GP Notify registrations over an extended period being defaulted to fax instead of email. If you would like GP notifications to be sent to your practice by email, please advise the RPH GP Notify Coordinator that you wish to change, including your name, practice and practice email by phoning 9224 2810, faxing 9224 2860 or emailing [RPH.GPN.coordinator@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:RPH.GPN.coordinator@health.wa.gov.au)

The Patient Administration System used by WA Health, only allows one email address per practice to be registered for GP Notify. For this reason, an email address for your practice is preferred over individual email addresses.

Please note GP Notify is old technology that cannot be sent by secure messaging. Electronic transmission of discharge summaries is by secure messaging and is preferred to fax or mail alone. If you would like to enrol for secure messaging for inpatient discharge summaries, please refer to the Discharge Summaries section at <http://www.rph.wa.gov.au/For-health-professionals/GPs/Communication>

RPH apologises for any inconvenience.

Dr Jacquie Garton-Smith  
Hospital Liaison GP, Royal Perth Hospital  
[Jacquie.Garton-Smith@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:Jacquie.Garton-Smith@health.wa.gov.au)  
Generally available Mondays and Thursdays

## Clinical Updates

### GP consultation on National Workforce Strategy

The Australian Government Department of Health has opened consultation on the draft National Medical Workforce Strategy. They are seeking feedback via an online survey from a range of key stakeholders including GPs. [Take the survey.](#)

## Clinical Updates

### AMA Obesity Awareness Week

This week's AMA Obesity Awareness Week focuses on simple, easy ways that everyday habits can be swapped for healthier outcomes.

Obesity Awareness Week coincides with the inaugural [World Obesity Day](#) on Wednesday 4 March that was created to inspire global change in policy making, attitudes and action in response to the obesity crisis worldwide.

The AMA has partnered with Screen-Free Week to include digital detox activities. Visit the [AMA website](#) to find more information and download GP resources to help support patients improve their daily eating and activity habits. There is also a "[Weight Management – Overweight Adults](#)" HealthPathway.

### Resources to support culturally appropriate Aboriginal aged care

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can face challenges in accessing culturally appropriate aged care services, especially those living in remote and very remote areas. End of life Directions for Aged Care have developed [health professional resources](#) to support and foster culturally safe and responsive aged care, advanced care planning and palliative care.

### New Stolen Generation survivors fact sheet for GPs

A new resource from the Healing Foundation is providing information for GPs to improve services for Stolen Generation survivors. Download [Working with the Stolen Generations: understanding trauma – fact sheets for GPs explores the history, current reality and medical care needs of Stolen Generations, things to avoid and how GPs can help](#)

## RACGP HANDI includes updated advice for managing low back pain

The RACGP's Handbook of Non-Drug Interventions ([HANDI](#)) aims to provide GPs with free, up-to-date evidence-based interventions that do not rely on prescribing and resources to assist in patient decision-making.

Recent updates and new HANDI entries add to the suite of 65 interventions, with more in development and planned to be released over the coming year. This includes a recent update to '[Advice to stay active for people with low back pain](#)'. There is also a "[Low Back Pain in Adults](#)" HealthPathway.

## Education Events

### [The Child with an Itchy Rash: Diagnosis and Management Plus Acne - What's New?](#)

WA Primary Health Alliance; HealthPathways WA  
Wednesday 18 March

### [WA Rural Health Conference](#)

Rural Health West  
Saturday 21-Sunday 22 March

### [WA Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector Conference](#)

Aboriginal Health Council of WA  
Wednesday 25 to Thursday 26 March

### [Supporting "Emma" Through Her Pregnancy Journey](#)

St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals  
Saturday 28 March

### [Childhood Allergies - How to Diagnose and Prevent?](#)

WA Primary Health Alliance; HealthPathways WA  
Wednesday 13 May

### [Common Paediatric Surgical Problems](#)

WA Primary Health Alliance; HealthPathways WA  
Wednesday 5 August

## Primary Care Reform Opportunities Dinner with Walid Jammal



WA Primary Health Alliance Chair, Dr Richard Choong invites GPs to join him at this unique dinner event featuring keynote speaker Dr Walid Jammal. Dr Jammal is the co-Chair of the Federal Government's Primary Care Reform Steering Group and will be covering:

- Key priorities for the Minister of Health and the 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan
- The upcoming voluntary patient enrolment measure for >70 year olds
- Team-based care and the opportunities for general practice.

**Date:** Thursday 12 March 2020

**Time:** 6:30pm (registrations from 6pm)

**Venue:** Matilda Bay Restaurant  
3 Hackett Drive, Crawley WA

**Registration and more information:**

<https://www.wapha.org.au/event/primary-care-reform-opportunities-dinner/>

Visit the calendar at  
[www.wapha.org.au/events](https://www.wapha.org.au/events)  
for more GP  
education events.