

GP Connect

Keeping GPs informed in the changing primary health landscape



23 September 2021

It starts with me

Learne Durrington, CEO
WA Primary Health Alliance

The critical nature of the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout and the need to protect our communities and reduce the impact of the pandemic, particularly on at-risk and vulnerable populations, has never been more apparent.

We have seen the devastating consequences of the spread of the Delta variant on our doorstep with healthcare staff in NSW struggling to cope with case numbers, COVID-19 positive people dying at home and people most at-risk of adverse COVID related health outcomes too scared to seek care.

We are each called on to take strong leadership roles within our workplaces and our communities.

We have time to continue to support and nurture important partnerships between general practice, primary care, state health, healthcare providers, community organisations and other vaccination partners.

We have time to prevent the tragic circumstances occurring in New South Wales playing out within the community we know and love – by encouraging our friends and families to be vaccinated.

General practices participating in the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out have administered more than a million vaccines in WA, almost half of the state-wide total, which includes those given at state-run and other vaccination centres.

With vaccine supplies increasing, it should take less time to double this number ahead of a potential Delta outbreak in WA. But we know that may not be enough.



We know that vaccine providers will need our help to achieve this collective goal to protect our state.

It starts with me is our way of asking everyone to take one small action today that will combine with the subsequent actions of other Western Australians to become a powerful movement.

We think these simple steps are a great way to start.

- **Walk the walk** – book your own vaccine appointment today, if you're not already vaccinated
- **Empower your staff** – encourage your staff to get vaccinated, and make it easy for them to do so
- **Work your contacts** – amplify the message and encourage your networks and peer groups to get on board and get vaccinated
- **Reach out** – consider practical ways to help people book an appointment and get to vaccination centres
- **Have the conversation** – talk to family and friends, and tell them to speak to their own GP if unsure about getting vaccinated

You can also [download these resources](#) for use across your internal and external communications

We urge everyone to join us in helping WA COVID-19 vaccination providers to reach this critical goal, while we still have time.

For links to resources, clinical updates and more, visit news.wapha.org.au

Hospital Liaison GP Updates

PCH Care coordination program for children with long term medical complexity

The Connect Care Program for Kids is a care coordination program for children with long term medical complexity. Provided by the Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) and delivered by the Ambulatory Care nurses at Perth Children's Hospital (PCH), the program provides varying levels of support to meet the individual needs of patients and families in the community. It offers a single point of contact, allowing experienced nursing staff to partner with families, specialist teams and community services to coordinate a child's care.

The services provided by the Connect Care Program include:

- Discharge planning
- Parent education
- Development of an Integrated Health Care Plan
- Telephone support
- Community outreach, including linkage with GPs and community health nurses
- Linkage with local hospitals and other health services
- Home visits (Perth metropolitan area only)
- Emergency Department notification (PCH and local hospitals)
- Linkage with peer supports
- Coordination of outpatient appointments
- Referral to and assistance to navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Transitional care

Children enrolled in the Connect Care Program for Kids will be assisted by the Clinical Nurse Team and one of the team may accompany the family at the initial visit to the GP. Dr Rachel Collins is the paediatrician supporting this program and is keen to establish a support service to the GPs looking after children with complex needs. This would involve direct communication with the GP.

Dr Maree Creighton

Hospital Liaison GP, Perth Children's Hospital
maree.creighton@health.wa.gov.au

Available: Tuesday 9am-12pm and Wednesday 12pm-5pm

Referral update and new training opportunities from KEMH

Referrals for Antenatal Care at Women and Newborn Health Service, including KEMH - To enable appropriate triage at King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH), please send detailed antenatal referrals early in pregnancy – particularly if specialty obstetric clinics are required, as medical review may be needed before 14 weeks' gestation.

The [KEMH Antenatal Referral Form](#) or equivalent GP template can be used to email the KEMH Referral Co-ordinator at KEMH.Referrals@health.wa.gov.au or fax (08) 6458 1031.

Clinical concerns during pregnancy can be discussed via phoning (08) 6458 2222 and asking for:

- Gynaecology on call registrar if pregnancy gestation less than 20 weeks'
- Obstetrics on call Registrar if pregnancy gestation greater than 20 weeks'
- The Maternal Fetal Medicine Fellow or Consultant if high risk pregnancy, maternal or fetal disorder is identified, or a fetal anomaly is detected on ultrasound

Referrals for Gynaecology care at WNHS, including KEMH - Please direct gynaecology referrals to the [WA Central Referral Service](#). Urgent referrals and clinical concerns can be discussed by calling (08) 6458 2222 and asking for the Gynaecology on call Registrar, or Consultant if the case is complex.

Referrals to the Western Australian Gynaecologic Cancer Service - Please refer to the [Western Australian Gynaecologic Cancer Service Information page](#) on the Women and Newborn Health Service (WNHS) website for information about the referral process, required investigations and contact details when clinical concerns or GP advice is required.

GP Shared Care Webinar Education Series - The Post Graduate Medical Education unit are pleased to offer GPs from across WA, with an interest in Shared Maternity Care a free monthly education webinar series – presented by speakers from WNHS. The webinars are on a Tuesday evening once a month, starting at 6pm. It is free to register, and webinars are recorded for later viewing. Please email Dr Sarah Smith, KEMH Liaison GP if you would like to receive registration information
KEMH_HLGP@health.wa.gov.au

Hospital Liaison GP Updates

Referral update and new training opportunities from KEMH(cont)

Online training in Family and Domestic Violence -

The Women's Health Strategy and Program team at WNHS have developed an online training module and resources for healthcare staff involved in screening for and managing disclosures of Family and Domestic Violence. The [Family and Domestic Violence Toolbox](#) is available to GPs via the [WNHS website](#), and it includes new posters about Healthy Relationships that can be printed for display in waiting rooms / toilets / consulting rooms.

Multilingual Virtual Tours at OPH in five languages

NMHS through Women and Newborn Services based at Osborne Park Hospital, has just launched four virtual tour videos walking through their facilities and explaining the processes involved so women and their families can be optimally prepared for their maternity, obstetrics, and gynaecology health care journey. The four videos cover the antenatal clinic, the assessment unit, the birthing suite, and the gynaecology clinic and are in four languages (English, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Chinese) with a fifth (Arabic) to follow. [Download the videos](#) to share with your patients.

Dr Sarah Smith

Hospital Liaison GP

Women and Newborn Health Service

King Edward Memorial Hospital

KEMH_HLGP@health.wa.gov.au

Clinical Updates

WA Department of Health concerns about S8 prescribing

Investigations by the Medicines and Poisons Regulations Branch (MPRB), at WA Department of Health, have identified a number of recurring concerns in relation to Schedule 8 (S8) medicines:

- Prescribing of S8 medicines for patients who are recorded as drug-dependent or over-supplied, without the prescriber being authorised to prescribe for that patient as required by the [S8 Medicines Prescribing Code](#)
- Prescribing of S8 medicines for patients who are recorded as drug-dependent or over-supplied, without the prescriber being authorised to prescribe for that patient as required by the S8 Medicines Prescribing Code
- Prescribers not contacting the Branch to confirm a patient's status and S8 history, particularly when prescribing S8 medicines for a patient who is new to their practice.
- Practices not confirming the identify of patients when they first attend the practice, which allows them to use different aliases at multiple practices
- Practice staff not understanding that the dispensing pharmacist must, by law, speak directly with the prescriber to verify S8 prescriptions, before these prescriptions can be dispensed for the patient
- Prescribers not meeting their obligation to provide the original paper-based S8 prescription directly to the supplying pharmacy, where they have previously used a digital image (such as via fax or email) to direct a pharmacist to dispense for their patient. The use of a fully electronic prescription means there is no requirement to mail prescriptions to pharmacies.

Until Real-Time Prescription Monitoring becomes available to prescribers through practice software in early 2022, WA Health recommends that GPs who are considering prescribing a S8 medicine, first contact the S8 Prescriber Information Service on 9222 4424 (Monday to Friday 8.30 to 4:30) to:

- Check whether the patient has been flagged as exhibiting high-risk behaviour, such as doctor-shopping or drug dependency; and
- Obtain information about their previous history of prescribed S8 medicines.
- MPRB also issues Patient Alerts for patients deemed to be at very high risk, because they are actively doctor shopping, using multiple aliases and/or forging prescriptions. Because MPRB only has verified contact details for registered pharmacies, these alerts are sent to pharmacies rather than general practices with the instruction to contact the Department if they receive a S8 prescription for a person who is subject to a Patient Alert and MPRB and the prescriber.
- See also the "[Schedule 8 Medicines](#)" HealthPathway.

Clinical Updates

Extension to Digital Image Prescriptions

The Australian Government Department of Health has confirmed that image based prescribing will be extended beyond 30 September 2021 to end December 2021. This includes the following Commonwealth COVID-19 PBS arrangements:

- Image prescriptions
- Expanded continued dispensing
- Prescription signature exemptions
- Prescription home delivery service

Despite the extension, practices are still strongly encouraged to transition to the use of [electronic scripts](#) as they are faster, secure and more convenient for prescribers, dispensers and consumers. For support or queries on the use of eScripts, please contact your software vendor or the WA Primary Health Alliance Digital Health Team at digital.health@wapha.org.au

See also "[Electronic Prescribing](#)" HealthPathway.

WA Health Onelink vaccine ordering system now active

WA Health has advised from this Monday 20 September, there will be several changes to how you order and receive National Immunisation Program vaccines.

The staggered transition of immunisation providers to the [Onelink](#) vaccine ordering system commenced this week and you will be notified by the WA Department of Health and Onelink when your account is making the transition.

To support you through these changes, WA Department of Health have developed some [frequently asked questions](#) for your information.

Please ensure you have Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari or Firefox installed on your practice computers to you use to place your vaccine orders.

In the meantime, please contact vaccineorders@health.wa.gov.au with any queries.

Care of Patients with Disabilities HealthPathway is now live

HealthPathways WA, collaborated with individuals with disabilities and their carers, the WA Disability Health Network, and numerous health professionals to develop the "[Care of Patients with Disabilities](#)" pathway.

People with disabilities can have complex needs with many aspects to assess and manage. As one GP commented, "We really need help – my disability patients are the hardest to manage because it's so hard to find what's out there".

The "[Care of Patients with DisabilitiesHealthPathway](#)" aims to help fill this gap by giving WA GPs an easy-to-follow framework for aspects to consider when assessing and managing the care of people with disabilities, and links to relevant supports.

Any registered health professional in WA can request a HealthPathways website login by contacting the team via healthpathways@wapha.org.au.

Upcoming regulatory changes to nicotine vaping products

From 1 October 2021 consumers will require a prescription for all purchases of nicotine vaping products, such as nicotine e-cigarettes, nicotine pods and liquid nicotine. This includes products purchased both in Australia and from overseas.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is undertaking a program of communication and education activities to inform consumers and health professionals about the changes to how nicotine vaping products can be accessed, prescribed, and supplied in Australia from this date.

[Download the communication pack](#) to share through your practice's communication channels

Help patients experiencing hardship to eliminate court fines through addressing underlying issues



People experiencing hardship often lack the financial and legal capability to address court fines, which can result in adverse consequences that compound their level of disadvantage.

This includes single parents, people in disadvantaged housing, people on government benefits, people with a disability and unemployed people.

The WA Government's Work and Development Permit (WDP) Scheme offers an alternative pathway for people experiencing hardship to reduce or eliminate their court fines by participating in activities or treatment provided by approved sponsors, including their GP.

For example, GPs can sponsor patients through recording their participation in mental health, drug, or alcohol treatment.

The Work and Development Permit (WDP) Scheme is a joint initiative involving Department of Justice, Legal Aid WA, and Aboriginal Legal Service WA. Download the [Sponsor Application Fact Sheet](#) or visit the [Department of Justice website](#) for more information.

2021 second quarter childhood immunisation rates released

The Australian childhood immunisation rates continue to be high, with the 2021 second quarter results showing the coverage rate has remained above the national immunisation target of 95% for all 5-year-olds at 95.2%.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at 5 years of age continue to have the highest coverage rate of any group at 97.1%. The coverage rate for 2-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children increased to 92.0%, while the rate for 1-year-olds is 93.4%.

GP podcast series from Dementia Training Australia

Dementia Training Australia (DTA) has released a series of podcasts about improving the lives of people living with dementia. The content is designed for GPs and primary health care professionals by GPs.

[Dementia in Practice: Now we're talking!](#) features GPs, Dr Hilton Koppe, Dr Marita Long and Dr Steph Daly as they share their professional and personal experiences with dementia to help other GPs better understand what dementia is and how to prevent it, diagnose it, manage it and live with it.

There is a suite of "[Cognitive Impairment and Dementia](#)" HealthPathways.

Lung cancer training

Commissioned by Cancer Australia, Lung Foundation Australia has developed an accredited, scenario-based eLearning course, [A Systematic Approach to Investigating Symptoms of Lung Cancer](#). The training is designed to help you recognise lung cancer in symptomatic patients and to apply the recommendations of Cancer Australia's updated resource [Investigating symptoms of lung cancer: a guide for all health professionals \(the Guide\)](#).

GP Consultation

Palliative Care in Residential Aged Care Forum



WA Primary Health Alliance, in partnership with the WA Department of Health, invite metropolitan-based GPs with an involvement or interest in the delivery of care within Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) to participate in a Forum on end-of-life and palliative care in WA RACFs

Who should attend? GPs in metropolitan areas of WA with are providing care to people who are living in RACFs.

The Forum will bring together metropolitan-based GPs to consider primary care in the RACF setting and how future service improvement projects can best support them to meet the end-of-life and palliative care needs of RACF residents and their families.

The role of GPs and general practices is central and critical to an effective, comprehensive palliative care approach. With increasing age, frailty and multimorbidity, more and more older people are living with chronic conditions and their trajectory of illness will be progressive. This is particularly relevant to GPs who work in a RACF setting.

The RACGP Aged Care Clinical Guide (Silver Book) states that over half of the people admitted to aged care have a diagnosis of dementia, accompanied by a high incidence of distressing symptoms.

The RACGP states end-of-life and palliative care should therefore be core business for RACF providers, but notes the quality of this care in this setting is variable.

Forum participation offers an opportunity for GPs to discuss and directly inform:

- The WA Department of Health prioritisation of the remaining \$4 million National Partnership Agreement funding for additional projects to 30 June 2024.
- Understanding of current implementation barriers, enablers and opportunities identified by GPs' experience providing palliative care in RACFs.
- Models that build relationships and access to information for GPs delivering palliative care in RACFs through formal networks, advisory panels or communities of practice.
- Opportunities for GPs to work in partnership with WA Primary Health Alliance to explore how to best support GPs to provide quality primary healthcare to people who are living in RACFs.

A separate session for GPs practising in Country WA will be delivered in partnership with WA Country Health Service and the WA Department of Health.

Date: Wednesday 20 October 2021

Time: 7am-9am

Venue: The University Club of Western Australia, Seminar Room 4

Registration:

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/WAPHA1/WADepartmentOfHealthGPConsultationEndOfLifeAndPalliativeCareInResidentialAgedCare>

For more information, [read the background information](#) or contact Practice Assist at 1800 2277478 or email practiceassist@wapha.org.au

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