

GP Connect

Keeping GPs informed in the changing primary health landscape



20 February 2020

Data linkage could be key to better health

A collaborative project between WA Primary Health Alliance and Curtin University is linking healthcare data from hospitals and general practices, where permission has been given, with the aim of making it easier for health professionals to monitor, evaluate and assess consenting patients and improve outcomes in the process.

The project has received grant funding from the Western Australian Health Translation Network and is a cross-system collaboration including representatives from General Practice, South and East Metro Health Services, University of Notre Dame, WA State Health Department and the WA Health Consumers' Council.

Together they will examine data linkage and integration between general practice (primary care) and hospitals (secondary care) in a bid to increase the effectiveness and efficiencies of health services in WA.

WA Primary Health Alliance's Manager of Primary Care Data and industry embedded Curtin researcher, Richard Varhol, said data linkage would allow health collections from different sources to be anonymously linked and securely integrated to support policy development and clinical management of chronic disease in WA.

"A longstanding challenge for health professionals and population health researchers has been accessing public and private health data which remains siloed and hard to join up," he said.

"This lack of consistent and connected data between primary and secondary healthcare systems makes monitoring, evaluation and assessment for patient management, health utilisation and patient outcomes challenging."

"Conversely an integrated, system-wide approach will allow for a better understanding of a patient's journey, enabling us to develop more efficient interventions in targeted areas within the health system, with the aim of improving both quality of care and reducing costs."

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The project will assess and inform models of care and health service utilisation by using information routinely captured in general practice. The dataset will also be linked with secondary care data from hospitals to explore three main chronic diseases identified as priority areas by the Australian Government - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes and heart failure.

In line with WA Primary Health Alliance's state-wide structure and strong partnerships which shape, strengthen and sustain a health system that works for people to achieve better healthcare, particularly for those at risk of poor health outcomes, this information will be assessed for its use in clinical management of patients diagnosed with chronic diseases, along with how effectively it informs population health planning.

Upcoming GP education events on page 3.

GP Hospital Liason Updates

Royal Perth Bentley Group increases scope of day surgery

The types of surgery that can safely be performed as day surgery are expanding with some centres aiming for over 70% of all surgery to be undertaken as a day case. Royal Perth Bentley Group (RDBG) is increasing the scope of procedures where the patient can be discharged on the day of surgery to include laparoscopic cholecystectomy, hernia repair and an increasing number of breast surgeries.

With good patient selection and post-operative support, the impact on primary care should be minimal. Patients are screened preoperatively for medical, surgical and social factors that may exclude day surgery. Immediately post discharge, patients can call the ward directly with any concerns about their care.

RDBG values GP feedback. Please contact Dr Alison Corbett, Clinical Lead at Alison.Corbett@health.wa.gov.au

Dr Jacquie Garton-Smith
Hospital Liaison GP, Royal Perth Hospital
Jacquie.Garton-Smith@health.wa.gov.au
Generally available Mondays and Thursdays

Clinical Updates

Workforce Incentive Program update

The Practice Nurse Incentive Program (PNIP) has now transitioned to the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) - Practice Stream.

The General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) transitioned to the WIP - Doctor Stream on 1 January 2020.

The WIP provides targeted financial incentives to encourage doctors to deliver services in rural and remote areas. The WIP also provides financial incentives to support general practices to engage the services of nurses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners, and eligible allied health professionals. More information on the eligibility for the WIP, the rural loadings that apply under the WIP and payment levels is available at the [Department of Health website](#).

Coronavirus (COVID) -19) - mask distribution update

Following an initial distribution of surgical masks to general practices as supplied by the Australian Government Department of Health, we are now in a position to reassess the needs of practices which did not receive an initial allocation, or whose needs may have changed.

To ensure the most appropriate allocation, we are applying the same risk factors to determine need as before i.e.: having a relatively high number of foreign nationals including students and tourists; proximity to a port or airport; having a relatively large Aboriginal population; or having a relatively high number of patients with existing respiratory conditions; and having a low number of masks in stock.

Given the ongoing national shortage of masks, we ask that you consider your practice's needs carefully. To apply, please complete the [online form](#).

If you have any queries about mask distribution, please contact our Practice Assist team on 1800 227 747 (Monday – Friday, 8.00am to 5.00pm) or practiceassist@wapha.org.au

Up to date clinical information

GPs are reminded that information regarding coronavirus (now called COVID-19) is continually changing. For example, last week, the indications for testing were broadened to include travellers from some countries other than China.

The Department of Health WA has regularly updated [information for health professionals](#).

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

Letter templates for cervical screening and follow-up

A suite of adaptable letter templates are now available to assist healthcare providers with the delivery of recall and reminder systems for cervical screening and follow up. Visit the Health WA website to access this resource and view the ["Cervical Screening"](#) HealthPathway.

Update regarding delegations to access the AIR

GPs with a Medicare provider number can now delegate their Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) access to another person, for example, a practice manager or practice nurse, to act on their behalf including:

- View and update individual immunisation records and reports
- Print immunisation history statements
- View claims submitted to the AIR
- View payment statements and reconciliation reports

Delegates can also request, view or modify AIR site reports including the 10A Due/Overdue report by Immunisation Practice. This can be downloaded monthly to keep your overdues maintained and to crosscheck your reminders. Contact your WA Primary Health Alliance Primary Health Liaison for support and resources.

This delegation is set up using the delegations function in [Health Professionals Online Service](#) (HPOS) and mirrors the process for Medicare access. To become a delegate, an individual must have their own PRODA account and an RA number. You can find more information about AIR HPOS delegations by visiting the [Services Australia website](#).

Public consultation sought on recommended use of pneumococcal vaccines

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is consulting with stakeholders on proposed changes to the pneumococcal vaccination recommendations for inclusion in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. The [public consultation document](#) can be accessed on the Department of Health website. Questions and feedback can be made via the [online survey](#) until 11.59pm on Sunday 1 March 2020. Email the ATAGI secretariat via ATAGI.Secretariat@health.gov.au if you have any questions regarding this consultation.

Vaccine Updates email system changing

The Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) are changing the email system by which they send out Vaccine Updates. [Subscribe to the new mailing list](#) to keep up to date on the latest WA immunisation, surveillance and disease control information. Subscribers may receive duplicate emails while the CDCD will continue to distribute to both old and new mailing lists.

Education Events

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 February 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/>

[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