

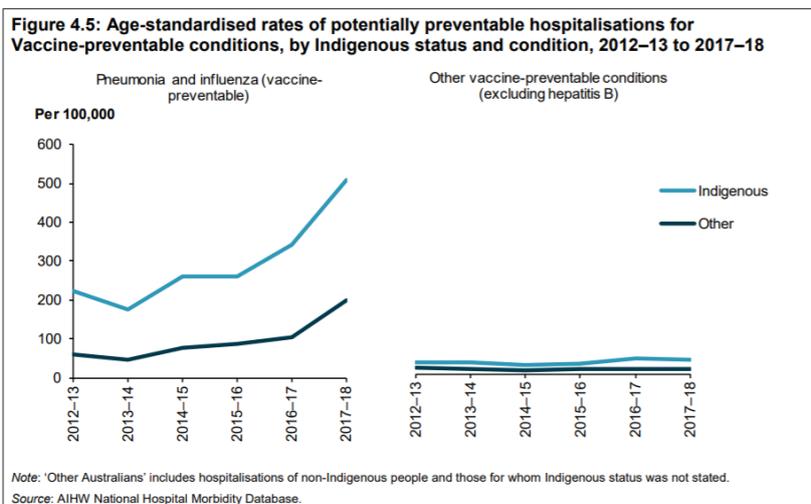
# COVID-19 GP Factsheet Aboriginal Population

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and private general practice have a significant role to play in improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) patients. WA Primary Health Alliance's data extraction shows the Aboriginal population attending private practice as a percentage of census population is Perth North PHN 66%; Perth South PHN 73%; and Country PHN 61%.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to promote wellness among your Aboriginal patients, particularly those with a chronic condition. A culturally secure and well-resourced intervention strategy is required to mitigate the risk and improve outcomes for this group who have been identified as high-risk. For example, reminders about COVID-19 preventative measures, reminding older Aboriginal patients about staying at home, discussing chronic conditions and behaviour, and using the checklist below will all help to protect and improve recovery, if they do contract the virus.

## Key data findings:

- For seasonal influenza, Aboriginal people have a higher rate of mortality than the Australian population.
- They have a higher rate of potentially preventable hospitalizations for vaccine preventable influenza and pneumonia than the Australian population.
- There are a number of sources reporting a much higher morbidity and mortality for the Aboriginal population during the Swine Flu (H1N1) pandemic of 2009.



## Key drivers of increased risk of transmission and severity:

1. Aboriginal people tend to travel frequently for community events, often travelling long distances.
2. 20% of the population live in remote areas, often with reduced access to health services
3. They may present late in the disease progression
4. 45% of Aboriginal people over 18 are smokers. Smoking is likely to increase risk of severe COVID19 symptoms.
5. Overcrowding facilitates disease transmission and makes it hard to maintain quarantine and social distancing measures.



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Wellness checklist: This checklist focuses on managing chronic conditions. Acknowledgment of the centrality of culture to an Aboriginal person is critical.	Yes	Comments
<p><b>1. Consider use of COVID19 Telehealth items wherever possible.</b>            Relevant vulnerable/isolated patient criteria include a person who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) at least 50 years old and is of Aboriginal descent; or</li> <li>b) is pregnant; or</li> <li>c) is a parent of a child under 12 months; or</li> <li>d) is already under treatment for chronic health conditions; or</li> <li>e) is immune compromised.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>2. GP Management Plan and Team Care Arrangements Review</b>            Ensure these are current and recall any overdue patients. For ITC clients, consider inclusion of the relevant ITC Provider in the TCA.</p> <p>Medical Practitioners can now use telehealth/phone consultations for the preparation of a GP management plan (Item 721) or an Aboriginal Health Check (Item 715).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>3. For patients with chronic conditions who are not self-managing</b>            Consider <a href="#">referral to the Integrated Team Care (ITC) Program</a> for additional support for patients with complex or multidisciplinary care management needs. The ITC Program may be able to support coordination of telehealth appointments for registered clients.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>4. Medication review</b>            For all Aboriginal patients with complex chronic condition management needs, but particularly for patients with respiratory conditions</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>5. My Health Record</b>            Check that My Health Record is up to date. Especially important as patients may require treatment from another medical practitioner or a hospital.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>6. Encourage smoking cessation</b>            Tobacco smoking is the most preventable cause of ill health and early death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is responsible for 23% of the gap in health burden (the total impact of disease, injury and death to Australians) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program aims to improve that life expectancy by reducing tobacco use.</p> <p>Aboriginal people qualify for the existing PBS Authority listing, which provides an additional course of nicotine patches (up to two courses per year, each a maximum of 12 weeks).</p> <p><b>Patients can call Quitline on 13 7848, chat to them online <a href="https://quitlinesa.org.au/">https://quitlinesa.org.au/</a> or text 0477 765 007 to receive a call back.</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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<p><b>7. Vaccinate for influenza</b></p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to get additional immunisations for free through the <a href="#">National Immunisation Program (NIP)</a> to protect them against serious diseases. These immunisations are in addition to routine vaccinations for <a href="#">children</a>, <a href="#">adults</a>, <a href="#">seniors</a>, and <a href="#">pregnancy</a>.</p> <p>The influenza vaccine is free for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged six months and over through the NIP. We encourage people to get their influenza vaccination as soon as they become available in April 2020.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>8. Explore what protective measures look like</b></p> <p>Hand hygiene; cough etiquette; stay home in one room if you are sick; social distancing (protect Elders by using internet and video calling to stay in touch with friends and family).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>9. Explore what the patient should do if they get sick and think it might be COVID-19</b></p> <p>Call the doctor (or hospital) first if you get sick with fever, have difficulty breathing or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or have recently been in a place where it has spread.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>10. Use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PBS listing</b></p> <p>Items on this list may be helpful in management of COVID19. For example Paracetamol. Items are available within your clinical software as Authority Required and Restricted Benefit items.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>11. Practice Incentive Payment Indigenous Health Incentive</b></p> <p>Check whether Aboriginal patients either with - or at risk of a chronic condition - have registered for PBS CoPayment (CTG scripts) using PIP IHI form; ensure registrations have been recorded appropriately in your clinical software; ensure GPs are familiar with how to prescribe CTG scripts.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>12. Refer to appropriate community resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Healthy WA webpage</b> - <a href="https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-information-for-Aboriginal-people">https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-information-for-Aboriginal-people</a></li> <li>• WA Health's posters and information sheet contain the key COVID-19 public health messages for Aboriginal people, as approved by the Department. <b>Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services</b> – <a href="#">COVID-19 Awareness Poster</a></li> <li>• <b>Children's Ground</b> – <a href="#">Community Resources</a></li> </ul> <p>Note: More resources will be made available from the Aboriginal Health Council of WA and nationally through Gayaa Dhuwi.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

