COVID-19
Tips for GP Administration Teams

Managing increased phone calls

- Consider a phone line dedicated to managing COVID-19 positive patients. You could:
  - purchase a temporary mobile phone with a dedicated number
  - add an additional option for your on-hold message
  - add waiting times in your on-hold message.
- Consider phone headsets for staff to support improved efficiencies and infection control.
- Consider additional non-clinical screening questions for your practice team to ask COVID-19 positive patients. Refer to HealthPathways COVID-19 Self-care Patient Triage and Support
- Advise patients that appointments will be via telehealth and communicate potential delays.
- Consider adding HealthyWA resources, such as WA COVID Care at Home FAQs, to your practice webpage, social media page and notice boards.
- Consider focusing on self-calming techniques when you encounter challenging behaviour.
- Ensure latest COVID-19 triage guide is available to all reception staff. Refer to HealthPathways COVID-19 Self-care Patient Triage and Support

Example of an on-hold message

"Thank you for calling (insert name) medical centre, we are currently experiencing a high number of calls leading to longer waiting times.

If this is an emergency, do not wait on hold. Please hang up and dial 000.

If you have tested positive to COVID-19 and have mild or no symptoms, please visit the HealthyWA website for advice and self-care resources.

If you have tested positive and feel unwell, please hold and one of our team will be with you as soon as possible or call our dedicated phone number on (insert number) and we will provide you with the relevant information.

For all other enquiries, please stay on the line."

Managing your appointment book

- Consider how you will structure your appointment book and communicate changes with the team.
  - Implement different icons or colours for different appointments based on risk.
  - Contact billing and appointment software support for tips on how to streamline appointment book and processes.
- Consider capacity and rostering schedules.
  - Roster a rotating COVID doctor and nurse/admin support for AM/PM shifts.
  - Review and allocate appropriate tasks to staff working from home. For example, divide work that requires answering of phones and work that can be done via computer only between in-practice staff and staff working from home.
  - Consider whether specific blocks of time in your appointment book for telehealth could increase efficiency.
  - If using SMS or email to patients, consider creating a template to be able to quickly send links to the WA COVID Care at Home webpage for support information.
  - Monitor any unmet demands to address capacity issues.
- Establish who will manage the patient if the treating GP is not available.
  - Consider the availability of other GPs/nurses in the practice.
  - Provide contact details for after-hours services and the WA COVID Care at Home service.
- Maximise the effectiveness of your appointment system by considering the tips in the links below:
  - Ten tips for becoming a Time Lord
  - Appointments 101

Documenting quality improvements

As each day of the COVID-19 pandemic brings about changes and new challenges, you should consider documenting and recording your practice's quality improvements for accreditation and PIPQI purposes.

For further information, view our recently released Quality Improvement (QI) Tool Kit which is designed to help practice teams undertake QI activities by offering useful information, resources, tools and templates.

Register for HealthPathways WA

HealthPathways WA is a secure, online portal with a suite of comprehensive pathways to help clinicians easily navigate their patients through the complex primary, community and acute healthcare system.

If you would like further information, visit the HealthPathways WA website

To register for login details, complete and submit the online form or email the team at healthpathways@wapha.org.au with your full name, professional role and organisation.

Key contacts for practices

- WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA):
  o WAPHA website
  o Practice Assist website

- COVID Hotline WA:
  o Call 13 COVID (13 268 43)

- National Coronavirus Hotline:
  o Call 1800 020 080

- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) website

Links to resources for patients

- My COVID-19 Symptoms Diary

- RACGP - Managing mild COVID-19 at home with assistance from your GP

- Multicultural Communities Council of WA - COVID-19 Response

- Healthdirect Symptom Checker

Links to professional support services

- RACGP Members GP Support Program

- Doctors Health Advisory Service

- ACCRM Clinician Support (1800 818 728)

- Nurse & Midwifery Support (1800 667 877)

If you require further assistance and support for your administration team, contact Practice Assist by calling 1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 277 478) or emailing practiceassist@wapha.org.au