

# Practice Connect

## Latest news and updates

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## Today is R U OK Day?

Thursdays 10 September is R U OK? Day.  
This year the key message is:

### 'There's more to say after R U OK?'

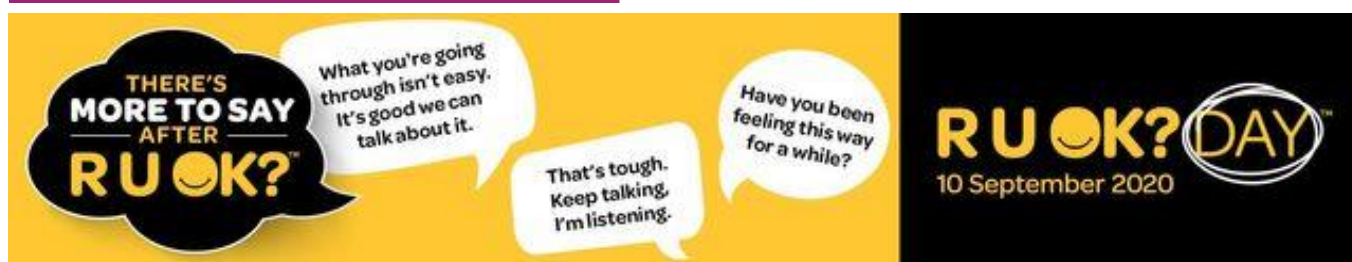
**R U OK? Day** is our national day of action with a reminder to everyone that every day is the day to ask, **"Are you OK?"** if someone in your world is struggling with life's ups and downs.

2020 has been a challenging year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and circumstances have made it even more important for us all to stay connected and, for those who are able, be willing to support those around us.

This **R U OK? Day** the key message is to help you to know what to say when someone says they're not OK and guide them through how they can continue a conversation that could change a life.

Visit the **R U OK? Day** website to **Learn what to say** when someone says they're not OK, and **Learn the signs it's time to ask R U OK?**

Further information is also available by downloading the **Guide to Supporting R U OK? DAY**, and additionally to **request free materials and resources** for your patients and practice.



## Help the East Metropolitan Health Service to improve communication with general practice

GPs play a vital role in caring for patients, connecting with public hospital services when required, and continuing care following discharge or outpatient review. The East Metropolitan Health Service (EMHS) wants to hear from GPs about their experience of communicating with our public hospitals, and what needs to be improved. Their feedback is essential to target action to the issues that matter to them most.

We especially want to hear from GPs who have had ANY patients attend one or more of Royal Perth, Bentley, Armadale, Kalamunda or St John of God Midland Public Hospitals in the past 12 months.

Feedback obtained through the survey will identify where hospitals have improved their communication with GPs and what requires further attention and help increase access to public hospital services.

Find out more and provide feedback [HERE](#), by 5pm, Monday 21 September.



## PIP QI: A reminder to practices

A brief reminder to all practices participating in the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Quality Improvement (QI) that a new quarter commenced on 1 August. To be eligible for this quarter, practices must undertake continuous quality improvement and share data with WAPHA at least once each quarter. If you have any questions, please visit the [Practice Assist FAQ page](#) or speak with your Primary Health Liaison or Comprehensive Primary Care Facilitator.

Any practice that anticipates not being able to submit their PIP QI Eligible Dataset to WAPHA must advise the Department by 30 September 2020 via [PIPQIexemptions@health.gov.au](mailto:PIPQIexemptions@health.gov.au). These practices will be dealt with on a case by case basis and further advice provided at that time.

## EPrescribing Update

The rollout of ePrescribing continues and WAPHA are supporting practices with this process. If you are interested in joining a Community of Interest, please contact the Digital Health Team via [ehhealth@wapha.org.au](mailto:ehhealth@wapha.org.au). The Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) has created a range of resources for practices to support their patients and these may be requested via the [Practice Assist website](#).

For updates on the status of ePrescribing across Australia, see the [ADHA website](#).

## Practice Assist Resource Library

As part of our support for general practices, Practice Assist maintains a library of useful resources in our [Practice Assist Resource Library](#). These resources range across different topics from GP Accreditation, Practice Incentives Program, to the latest in resources around COVID-19.

At present we are reviewing and updating all our resources to ensure that we have current, accurate and useful information available when needed.

Our most recently updated resources include:

### Business Management

- Hazard Observation and Identification Template
- Managing No-Show Patients

### COVID-19

- COVID-19 Action Plan
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 GP Mental Health Treatment Plan Additional Services (new)

### Digital Health

- Preparing for My Health Record (updated)
- Troubleshooting Video Consultations (updated)

### Human Resources

- Employment Contracts and Agreements (updated)
- The Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman (updated)
- Section 19AB Fact Sheet (updated)
- Section 19AA and 3GA Program (updated)
- What is a Distribution Priority Area? (updated)
- What is an Area of Need? (updated)
- What is the Ten-Year Moratorium? (updated)

### General Practice Accreditation

- Doctors Bag Checklist
- Spills Kit Checklist and Method for Cleaning Spills
- Vaccine Potency Checklist for Managing a Power Failure
- Computer Information Security Template (new)

### Practice Incentives Program

- PIP After Hours Incentive
- PIP eHealth Incentive (updated)
- Procedural GP Payment (updated)
- Rural Loading Incentive (updated)
- Teaching Payment (updated)
- Workforce Incentive Program (updated)

### Medicare Benefits Schedule

- Closing the Gap PBS Co-Payment Measure
- Healthcare Identifiers Service
- HPOS and PRODA
- MBS Cardiac Imaging Services for General Practice
- Pharmacy Dispensing in a Rural or Remote General practice
- Reciprocal Health care Agreements

### Programs and National Schemes

- Patient Assisted Travel Scheme Fact Sheet
- Viewing Air Information in My Health Record
- Accessing AIR using PRODA for Individuals (new)
- Accessing AIR using PRODA for Organisations (new)

### Quality Improvement

- Quality Improvement Register Template  
[Editable PDF version](#)

To view all of our resources please visit our [Practice Assist Resource Library](#) webpage, or to submit a **'new idea'** for a resource or provide us with **'feedback'** on our current resources please email [practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au).

## Wellbeing support at hand during stressful times

Professional and personal pressures can arise for general practice teams at the best of times, let alone during a global pandemic.

To support GPs and practice staff to look after themselves and take the necessary steps to support their wellbeing, WA Primary Health Alliance is offering three free confidential counselling sessions via its Wellness Program.

Provided through AccessEAP, and available to all WA-based general practice staff, the program offers confidential sessions with a counsellor who can offer information and assistance in navigating the COVID-19 response as well as other personal and professional issues.

Issues that can be addressed during counselling sessions include:

- Preparing for major life changes
- Changes at work
- Changes within family (marriage, new baby, divorce/separation)
- Goal setting for professional or personal life
- Developing new strategies for handling stress at work or at home
- Or simply to have someone to speak to about any of life's inevitable challenges



To book a confidential phone or video counselling appointment, you can call AccessEAP anytime on 1800 818 728.

You will need to identify as a WA Primary Health Alliance member.

GPs and practice staff can also contact Practice Assist by calling 1800 2 ASSIST or emailing [practice.assist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practice.assist@wapha.org.au) with any questions about the program.

For more information please visit the Practice Assist [COVID-19 Well-being and Support](#) webpage.

## 'Ahead for Business' digital hub providing online mental health support for small business owners

The Federal Government has launched the Ahead for Business initiative to ensure small business owners and their staff can access free support and resources.

Hosted by mental health organisation **Everymind**, the digital hub offers small and family businesses resources including articles, videos, podcasts and toolkits.

Anonymous peer-to-peer forums and an online wellbeing plan is also available.

Access the Ahead for Business digital hub [here](#).



## Extension of the Health Professional Disability Advisory Service

The Australian Government Department of Health is pleased to advise the extension of the COVID-19 **Health Professionals National Disability Advisory Service** initially set up in July for a trial 6-week period, to 17 November, 2020.

Health professionals involved in the care of people with disability diagnosed with COVID-19 or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms can call the service during the new operating times of 8 am to 9 pm (AEST) Monday to Friday on 1800 131 330.

Calls to the service are answered by health professionals with disability service qualifications and experience working with people with disability.

## Zoom GP Support Group

Dr Michael Murray is the geriatrician lead at Austin Health and currently with VARC. He has started a zoom GP support group focused on geriatric care in general but with a particular focus on provision of care to residents in aged care facilities in the context of the COVID pandemic. The zoom meetings held to date have been attended by a large number of GPs but also include geriatricians and infectious control specialists to discuss all complexities of care.

All GPs are welcome to attend the sessions. Arrangements to join the existing weekly sessions can be made through [Sachin@agedcaregp.com](mailto:Sachin@agedcaregp.com)



## Home-care guidelines for adult patients with mild COVID-19

The RACGP has developed this **guide** for GPs to support them in providing home-based care in a private residential home (including public or community housing) for adult patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and who are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms.

This document is generic, interim guidance for GPs and should be used to support any local or other more contemporaneous advice, acknowledging that in this rapidly changing pandemic environment, uncertainties remain in our understanding of the spread of COVID-19 and its management.

A **guide, action plan and symptom diary** is available to share with patients.

## Immunisation & Cancer Screening Updates

### Accessing AIR using PRODA for Individuals and PRODA for Organisations: New user guides now available

Services Australia have developed two user guides that provide a step-by-step guide to the registration process for an [individual](#) and an [organisation](#) to access the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) website using PRODA. These user guides have also been uploaded onto the Practice Assist website. All practice staff who access the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) will need to register for PRODA if they have not already done so as the authentication method for logging into the AIR will be discontinued at the end of September 2020.

Contact your WAPHA Practice Support Team member for assistance. See [HERE](#) for contact details.

### Zoster vaccination: GP survey finds knowledge gaps

The herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccination has been funded under the National Immunisation Program for adults aged 70 years, with a catch-up program for those aged 71–79 years, since 2016. An Australian survey of general practitioners (GPs) has found some gaps in knowledge of zoster vaccination recommendations and guidelines.

The survey was conducted by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) in 2017, one year after the introduction of the national zoster vaccination program, and the results have been published in [Communicable Diseases Intelligence](#). The survey found while most GPs knew about the eligibility criteria for funded vaccinations, there was lack of knowledge of the other age groups for which zoster vaccine is recommended but not funded. A small percentage of GPs were also unaware that this vaccine should not be given to immunocompromised people. The study can be read [here](#).

### Two new resources have been developed to support the current meningococcal vaccination programs in Western Australia

1. A new version of the 'WA guidance on managing fever after meningococcal B vaccine' has been produced specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It can be accessed [here](#). This guidance includes the recommendation that all children are given paracetamol before and after immunisation with Bexsero. Please provide this updated resource to relevant patients as needed.
2. Summary tables for meningococcal ACWY and meningococcal B vaccination for people with and without risk factors have been produced. They are available [here](#). This resource has been developed to help clarify the new meningococcal vaccination schedule changes introduced on the 1 July 2020. Also included is the ATAGI catch-up schedule for children with medical risk conditions associated with an increased risk of pneumococcal disease. These summary tables are designed to be used alongside the WA immunisation schedule.

## National cancer screening health worker engagement project

The University of Melbourne is undertaking a project to understand how the primary healthcare workforce engages with the national cancer screening program (bowel, breast and cervical). Findings from the study will lead to the development of materials and initiatives to assist in boosting cancer screening participation.

During the first phase of the project the researchers are interested in interviewing nurses, GPs and Practice Managers to understand more about their role, their go-to-resources when they need more information about the screening programs and resources they would like to have access to.

For information about how to become involved in the project please contact Ebony Verbunt, Research Assistant, University of Melbourne over [ebony.verbunt@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ebony.verbunt@unimelb.edu.au) or phone **0429 928 039**.

## Chronic Kidney Disease Management in Primary Care new edition

Kidney Health Australia have released the 4th edition of their handbook Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Management in Primary Care. This handbook provides health services with guidance and clinical tips for detecting, managing, and referring patients with CKD.

CKD Management in Primary Care is produced by Kidney Health Australia's Primary care education advisory committee (PEAK) and has been endorsed by the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN), the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) (accepted clinical resource), and the Australian Primary healthcare Nurses Association (APNA).

Download the digital version of the 4th edition handbook [here](#).

## TGA support for drug shortages and alternative medications

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have published a [web statement](#) to assist health professionals with choosing an alternative medicine for their individual patients during the shortage of particular oral contraceptive pills.

The TGA [web statement](#) includes a list of combined oral contraceptive pills and other prescribed products currently marketed in Australia which can be considered as alternatives. The benefits and risks of each option will need to be considered according to the individual needs and preferences of the patient, as well as their age and any co-morbidities.

Visit the [TGA medicine shortages page](#) for more information about current shortages.



## Royal Perth Hospital outpatient letter faxing

From Monday 21 September 2020, letters from some RPH outpatient clinics will be automatically faxed to GPs. This will allow GPs to receive outpatient correspondence more quickly than by mail and is an interim measure while we work towards secure messaging of outpatient letters.

**Where a fax appears to have been successfully transmitted, a hard copy of that outpatient letter will NOT be mailed.** Letters from clinics that do not have this facility will continue to be mailed for now, as will letters from Bentley Health Service (unless manually faxed if urgent). Where we do not have your fax number or the fax is not able to be transmitted, the letter will be mailed by post.

**Please be sure we have your correct fax number.** If you currently receive faxed GP notifications or discharge summaries from Royal Perth Hospital, we have your correct fax number. If your contact details or list of doctors working at your practice require checking or alteration, please telephone 9224 3673, fax: 9224 2348 or email on [RPH.GPN.Coordinator@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:RPH.GPN.Coordinator@health.wa.gov.au).

## NPS MedicineWise update: Opioid prescribing changes – improving safety, reducing harm

Every day in Australia, there are nearly 150 hospitalisations and 14 emergency department admissions relating to opioid use. Three people die from the harm that results. The majority of these admissions and deaths are from prescription opioids.

The Department of Health through the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is continuing to implement a number of regulatory changes to reduce the harm caused by opioid prescription medicines to Australians.

The TGA have implemented regulatory changes that will require sponsors to:

- register smaller pack sizes for short-term pain relief and to reduce the risk of harm from unused opioids (existing larger pack sizes will still be available for those who need them)
- add additional warning statements to the approved Product Information
- improve the information available to prescribers and consumers to inform about the potential risks and how to minimise them
- update prescribing indications for opioids to ensure patients are prescribed an opioid only where the benefits outweigh the risks.

In addition to the TGA reforms, a number of changes have been made to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) guidelines.

The changes include:

- changes to the conditions for use
- smaller maximum quantities for the treatment of short-term pain and
- changes to the authority requirements that doctors must follow for modified release opioids to be prescribed under the PBS.

The reforms aim to enable the safe and effective prescribing and use of opioids while maintaining access for patients who need them.



Further information is available here:

- Australian Government Department of Health Therapeutic Goods Administration website: [Prescription opioids: Information for consumers, patients and carers](#)
- The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme website: [Revised opioids PBS listings from 1 June 2020](#)
- NPS MedicineWise website: [Opioid prescribing changes – improving safety, reducing harm](#)

## GP Urgent Care Network

For Participating GP Urgent Care Practices

### Support for General Practices Participating in the Network Pilot

The network pilot recognises that GPs, practice managers, nurses and reception staff may need opportunities to refresh their urgent care skills. The RACGP WA, Benchmark, CTEC (UWA) and WAPHA will deliver a series of workshops over the life of the pilot which will focus on relevant skills and topics to support practice staff. These training opportunities can attract Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points. The delivery of these training opportunities may change due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### RACGP Urgent Care: Peer group learning workshops.

The Urgent Care Peer Group Learning (PGL) activity is designed to maximise the benefits of working and learning together in a peer group educational setting. These activities utilise peer support, interaction and reflection to enhance clinical competence, knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance of practices on specific urgent care topics. Completion provides CPD Accredited Activity Points.

Click [HERE](#) to complete an expression of interest in the Urgent Care: Peer group learning workshop.

The event flyer can be downloaded [HERE](#) for additional information.

Common presentations over the last month to GP Urgent Care Clinics have been:

- musculoskeletal and orthopaedic injuries
- gastrointestinal illnesses
- illnesses of the eye, ear, nose and throat
- stings & bites, rashes and wound infections
- abrasions and minor lacerations.

### Pharmacy promotion of GP Urgent Care Clinics

Pharmacies that are located close to GP Urgent Care Practices will be given posters in the next few months to display in their stores to help with Consumer Awareness. Pharmacists and Pharmacy staff will be informed of the GP Urgent Care Network to help navigate patients to practices that are in the Network.

Members of the Network should check [News and Alerts](#) on this site for information about up and coming events.

### Contact

If you require any further information, please email:

[urgentcare@wapha.org.au](mailto:urgentcare@wapha.org.au)

or you can call the Project Officer Cheryl Bell on 0429 126 925



**GP  
URGENT  
CARE**

WWW.PRACTICEASSIST

## COVID-19 HealthPathways Update

The following content updates have now been published:

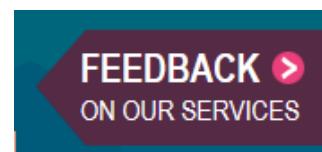


- Updated information based off of the Department of Health's clinician alert and testing criteria, effective 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2020, on the following pathways:
  - [COVID-19 Assessment and Management](#),
  - [COVID-19 Child Assessment and Management](#), and the
  - [COVID-19 in Residential Aged Care Facilities](#)
- [COVID-19 MBS Items](#):
  - Added a link to the Department of Health COVID-19 Telehealth Items Guide resource.
- [COVID-19 Child Assessment and Management](#):
  - Added a link to the National Evidence Taskforce newly released case definition of paediatric inflammatory multisystem disease (PIMS-TS) in the Practice Point section of the pathway.

## WACHS: Improved pathway for providing feedback experience with WACHS services

WA Country Health Service 'WACHS' is pleased to advise updates to their website to improve feedback pathways for GPs and other external service partners, to be able to more easily submit feedback directly to the WACHS organisation from their website.

This feedback page can be easily reached via any page on the WACHS website by clicking on the [Feedback On Our Services](#) icon, or by emailing: [wachs.comms@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:wachs.comms@health.wa.gov.au).



## MBS XML update for September now available

The updated XML file for changes to the MBS is now available for download [HERE](#).

Included in this update are description and eligibility changes for items in the Cardiac Imaging area. These changes are also outlined in our [MBS Cardiac Imaging Factsheet](#) and on the Services Australia [Changes to MBS item numbers for cardiac imaging services](#) page.

## nbn™ Australia Digital Opportunity Resources

On 26 August, nbn™ launched a new series developed in collaboration with six Australian based ICT vendors called Presented by business nbn™. The aim is to help enable small and medium business navigate digital opportunities or challenges by drawing on the expertise of our partners. This series was designed to complement resources available on the Australian information industry association's (AIIA) [Australian Business Continuity website](#).

Each week, for the next six weeks, a new resource will cover a variety of business topics from eCommerce and logistics through to AI and collaboration.

The first is Telehealth, featuring some simple tips for best-practice set-ups. Presented by business nbn™ and Poly video conferencing advice:

- Resource sheet: [Your guide to best practice telehealth set up](#)
- Infographic: [How to take WFH from good enough to best practice](#)
- Blog post: [Create a positive telehealth experience for patients](#)
- View on [LinkedIn](#)

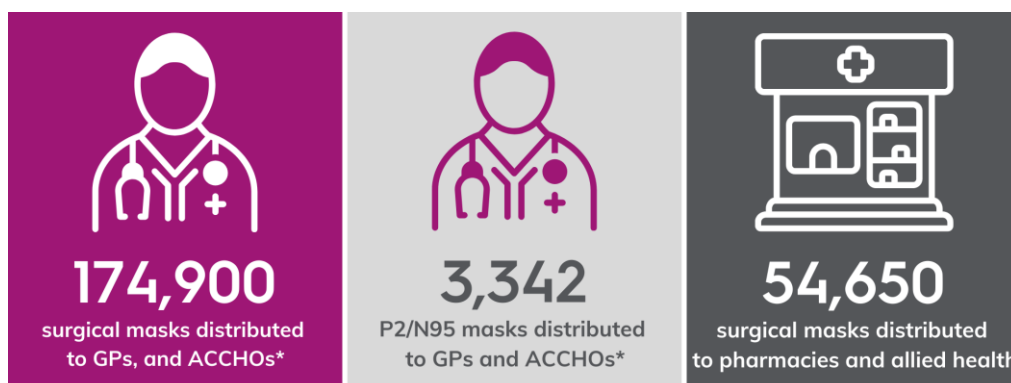
## Allocation of surgical masks from the National Medical Stockpile

WA Primary Health Alliance continues to operate a significant logistical strategy to distribute masks during the COVID-19 pandemic to general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, pharmacies and allied health practices that meet the criteria of the [Department of Health Tranche 4 guidelines](#).

For mask requests, visit the [Practice Assist website](#).

Please note, re-orders will not be accepted within five business days (Mon-Fri) of the previous request, except in exceptional circumstances.

Please send all general queries in relation to the National Medical Stockpile to [Stockpile.Ops@health.gov.au](mailto:Stockpile.Ops@health.gov.au).



\*Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

## Health Promotion Events

### World Heart Day is September 29

**World Heart Day** is a global campaign during which individuals, families, communities, and governments around the world participate in activities to take charge of their heart health and that of others.

Created by the **World Heart Federation**, World Heart Day informs people around the globe that Cardiovascular Disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke, is the world's leading cause of death claiming 17.9 million lives each year, and highlights the actions that individuals can take to prevent and control CVD.

The aim is to drive action to educate people that by controlling risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, at least 80% of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke could be avoided.



**WORLD  
HEART  
DAY** 29 SEP

### Get involved #USEHEART

This years' campaign, **#UseHeart to beat cardiovascular disease for society, your loved ones and you**. Focusses on the healthcare profession, national healthcare systems and our individual responsibilities.

You can help on World Heart Day by getting involved. The **World Heart Day Website** has many ways that you can support the cause. You can make your own posters, access a variety of resources and campaign information.

**USE ♥ TO BEAT ♥**

**For society, your loved ones and you**

Coming up soon...	
Dementia Awareness Month	September 1-30
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month	September 1-30
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month	September 1-30
Spinal Injury Awareness Week	September 7-13
World Alzheimer's Day	September 21
Mesothelioma Awareness Day	September 26



## Education and training

Visit our Webinars & Workshops page at [www.practiceassist.com.au](http://www.practiceassist.com.au) for the events calendar.

### Webinars

**Service Provider Workshop – Independent Review of Palliative Care**  
 Presented by Perron Institute  
 Multiple locations & dates

**Type 2 diabetes workshop “DESMOND”**  
 Presented by Diabetes WA  
 Multiple dates

**AAPM Virtual Education – Reception/Admin Workshop**  
 Presented by AAPM  
 Wednesday 9 September

**Understanding teenage boys**  
 Presented by RACGP  
 Thursday 10 September

**Improving Patient Outcomes and Experience**  
 Presented by the Public Sector Network  
 Thursday 10 September

**Exercise is Medicine: Enhancing patient outcomes through lifestyle interventions**  
 Presented by Exercise is Medicine Australia  
 Monday 14 September

**Psychological distress in primary health care nurses**  
 Presented by APNA  
 Wednesday 16 September

**Supporting patients living with chronic non-cancer pain – the role of the pharmacist**  
 Presented by NPS MedicineWise  
 Thursday 17 September

**Being armed and ready for digital nightmares**  
 Presented by AAPM  
 Thursday 17 September

**Virtual Paediatrics Hospital GP Education Series**  
 Presented by WAPHA and HealthPathways WA  
 Thursday 24 September

**The Cutting Edge: Proceduralist Obstetrics and Gynaecological Skills**  
 Presented by Rural Health West and CTEC  
 Friday 2 October

**The Cutting Edge: Managing Skin and Soft Tissue Injuries**  
 Presented by Rural Health West and CTEC  
 Friday 9 October

**Team Based Advance Care Planning and Palliative Care for General Practice**  
 Presented by Pasce  
 Thursday 15 October

**Registrar series: Medicare update**  
 Presented by RACGP  
 Thursday 22 October

**Environmental health: how climate change affects health and healthcare**  
 Presented by RACGP  
 Thursday 29 October

### Online Training

**Prepare for ePrescribing – free online course**  
 Presented by Australian Digital Health Agency

**COVID-19 Infection Control Training**  
 Presented by Department of Health

**Chronic Disease Management and Healthy Ageing Program**  
 Presented by APNA

**Advanced Skills Training AOD - GPs**  
 Presented by RACGP