

# Practice Connect

## Latest news and updates

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## COVID-19 milestone: Phase 1b vaccine rollout underway

Last week's start of Phase 1b of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout was a significant milestone, with the vaccine now available to more than six million Australians.

While not without its challenges, WA Primary Health Alliance is doing its upmost to provide information and support to general practices in Phase 1b and beyond, during this once in a lifetime public health program.

We received an overwhelming response to the Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate in Phase 1b, with more than 570 EOIs or close to 75% of WA's general practices applying.

Of those, about 490 practices are involved in Phase 1b of the rollout, offering free vaccinations to both their own patients and others who wish to book an appointment.



The Clarkson GP Respiratory Clinic is one of about 490 general practices across WA taking part in the Phase 1b vaccine rollout. They reported a successful first day of running their COVID-19 vaccination clinic.

To support them, we are bolstering our practice support team with additional staff and phone lines, running regular information webinars, sending three e-news updates a week, and providing bespoke support where required.

## Our aged care sector relationships deepen

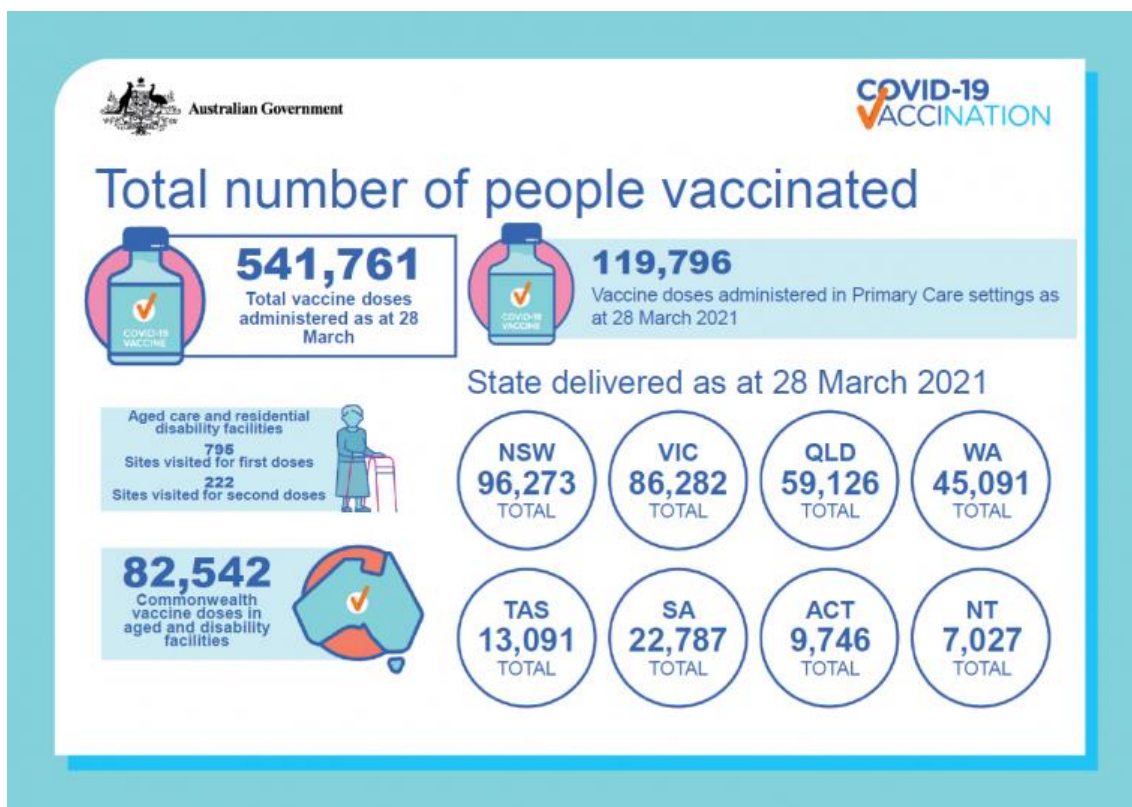
Importantly, in the past month, our remit to support the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in Western Australia has also seen us build and deepen our relationships with the residential aged care sector.

Our interactions with aged care peak bodies Leading Aged Services Australia and Aged and Community Services Australia, have been both informative and fruitful in building our understanding of their members' and their residents' needs.

Our support for residential aged care facilities includes pre-vaccine visit phone calls, weekly e-news updates, dedicated web pages, webinars and individual follow ups by our aged care coordinator to ensure quality control and continuous improvement.

Additionally, we have built a profile of the many general practitioners who provide services for aged care residents, which has allowed us to engage with GPs and appraise them of the program, allowing them to provide support to the aged care staff, residents and their families, including by providing advice on medical suitability to receive the vaccine.

In the context of the national picture as of 28 March, WA's progress was impressive and we continue to work closely with the Commonwealth government's vaccine workforce provider, to maintain and improve systems and processes.



## Update for practices participating in the Phase 1b rollout

All ordering and stock management for general practices should occur through the [online portal](#) (CVAS) noting:

- Stock Acceptance Forms should be completed on the day of delivery (as soon as possible)
- Stock Management Forms should be completed by 9pm every Friday (local time).

Site codes for Week 4 practices commencing Monday 5 April were sent **Friday 26 March**, and all Week 4 orders were due by midnight **Monday 29 March** (for delivery during Week 4).

This due date was for all weekly cohorts.

Once all weekly cohorts have been onboarded, a regular ordering cycle will be implemented. The Australian Government Department of Health will soon provide further advice.



## Access to COVID-19 vaccines for 16 to 18 year olds

The online [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker and Site Finder](#) has been updated and people under 18 years are no longer prompted to book through the vaccine clinic finder.

If individuals under the age of 18 present for vaccination they should not be given an AstraZeneca vaccine, even if they meet broader Phase 1b criterion.

Whilst Pfizer is approved for people aged 16 years and above, discussions are underway with the states and territories to ascertain if Pfizer hubs can be accessed by people who are aged between 16 and 18 years and eligible in Phase 1b.

At this stage states and territories are continuing to prioritise their 1a population.



## COVID-19 HealthPathways Updates

The following content updates have now been published on the HealthPathways site:

### COVID-19 Assessment and Management

Updated to include new self-isolation information sheets for:

- people awaiting test results.
- returned travellers and close contacts

### Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination

- Updated Anaphylaxis and allergies advice as per updated ASCIA position statement
- Added information to encourage patients to source appropriate proof of eligibility or to complete the eligibility declaration form
- Updated details for reporting adverse events following immunisations to WAVVS using the Safevac online form
- Updated section on immunocompromise, immunosuppressive therapy and HIV
- Updated section on anticoagulation therapy and bleeding disorders.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Added new or updated Australian Department of Health resources:

- Clinical guidance for vaccine providers
- COVID-19 Vaccination – Monitoring and Reporting Side Effects
- COVID-19 Disability Provider Alert 19 March 2021

Added new patient resources:

- Get proof of your COVID-19 vaccination
- COVID-19 Vaccines– Is it True?

To access HealthPathways please email the HealthPathways team at [healthpathways@wapha.org.au](mailto:healthpathways@wapha.org.au)

## New Resource on COVID-19 vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People



The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) have jointly prepared a comprehensive resource that uniquely provides information and answers questions about COVID-19 vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Information about COVID-19 vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People available to download [here](#).

## Updated COVID-19 vaccine resources for patients

The Australian Government Department of Health has updated a range of vaccine resources for patients in an easy to print format:

- Information on COVID-19 Pfizer (Comirnaty) vaccine
- After your Pfizer (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine
- After your AstraZeneca vaccine
- Information on COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine
- Preparing for COVID-19 vaccination

## New Cancer Australia information on the COVID-19 vaccines for people affected by cancer

Cancer Australia has released information on the COVID-19 vaccines for people affected by cancer. This includes a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the COVID-19 vaccines and cancer, and links to health professional guidance and research articles. This webpage is available at <https://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-and-cancer>.

## Single source of truth for COVID-19 vaccine information

The Australian Government Department of Health website has been updated to provide all general and clinical information on COVID-19 vaccination in one location, rather than multiple stand-alone FAQ documents. Visit:

- **COVID-19 vaccine – Advice for vaccine providers**  
Guidance includes advice on drawing up the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, clinical advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 vaccination and scheduling influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations
- **COVID-19 vaccine – Clinical considerations**  
Includes advice on vaccine handling, vaccinating patients who cannot attend the clinic and vaccine assessments.

Information will be updated as needed.



# A New Direction for WA Primary Health Alliance's General Practice Support and Development

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is committed to supporting general practice as the cornerstone of successful primary health care and the key to ensuring we have a high-quality, equitable and sustainable health system in Western Australia.

In response to the new primary health care landscape, WAPHA has restructured our general practice support teams. We will embed WAPHA's new structure for general practice support, innovation and development by 1 July 2021 and will continue to update you and your practice staff as regards these changes and what they mean for you.

[Click here](#) for more information, or view the [restructure summary here](#).



## WAPHA's GP Innovation Grants

**\$1,500 grants for IT equipment. Don't miss out, apply now.**

Would you like to enhance your practice's digital capability with new information technology (IT) equipment to take part in virtual programs, such as telehealth video consultations, webinars, online meetings and more?

To support general practices across Western Australia, WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is providing GP Innovation Grants of up to \$1,500 per practice, including GST, for the purchase of information technology (IT) equipment to participate in virtual programs.

Don't miss this one-time-only opportunity to take advantage of WAPHA's GP Innovation Grants, which are being allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

To apply for a grant, log in to the [WAPHA portal](#) and submit the online application form by the closing date of Friday 23 April 2021. If required, email [Practice Assist](#) for log in details.

For more information about WAPHA's GP Innovation Grants and the online application process, view the [fact sheet](#), email [Practice Assist](#) or call 1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 277 478).



*Please note: WAPHA's GP Innovation Grants are designed to assist general practices with limited digital capability. As a result, corporate practices or legal entities with multiple practices can only apply for a grant for a maximum of four of their practices. Corporate practices and these legal entities should contact their head office before they apply for a grant.*

## 2021 Influenza Vaccine Allocations

Deliveries of Influenza Vaccines in the 2021 Pre-allocation system for the over 65 year old cohort have begun to arrive at practices. Further cohorts in the pre-allocation period will become available for delivery shortly.

Practices are reminded that when viewing allocations of influenza vaccines in the WA Primary Health Alliance Portal, you are only be able to see cohort allocations and deliveries as they are approved by the WA Department of Health. As allocations are dependent on vaccine stock availability, we are unable to advise on timelines for future approvals.

For practices that did not participate in the pre-allocations, you will be able to order government-funded vaccines through the [WA Health online ordering system](#). You will be notified by the vaccine order team when the ordering system is open for orders.

Please note, practices are still able to order private stock as per your normal process.

Further information and FAQ's are available on the Practice Assist [2021 Government-Funded Influenza Immunisation Program for General Practice](#) page.



## 2021 WA Influenza Program Information session – session recording now available

The WA Department of Health's Immunisation Program hosted the **2021 WA Influenza Program information session** on 22 March 2021 for all immunisation providers of WA, covering the following topics:

- Influenza Surveillance
- Influenza Program overview
- Vaccine brands for 2021 – Ordering/reporting requirements
- AIR update: PRODA
- COVID-19 Vaccination Program Update
- Influenza 2020 Overview

The recording can be viewed [here](#).

For more information regarding the 2021 influenza program in Western Australia, please visit the [Influenza immunisation program](#) website.

## Stay up to date with COVID-19 Vaccine Developments

### Message from Department of Health for Phase 1B General Practice Vaccination Providers

We have anecdotal reports of practices charging patients to see a doctor prior to their vaccination booking. The below message is currently on our [website](#):

**‘Vaccination providers cannot charge to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine is free for everyone in Australia and the consult appointment for patients to receive their vaccinations is also free. Charging a patient any costs associated with the administration of the COVID-19 vaccination (including booking fees) is a breach of the requirements under the program. Patients without a Medicare card can be vaccinated for free at Commonwealth-funded GP-led Respiratory Clinics’.**

### Scholarship Opportunity - Regional WA Scholarships to attend the 17th National Immunisation Conference 2021

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) and the WA Department of Health are offering scholarships to support regional WA people to attend the [17th National Immunisation Conference 2021](#) to be held from Tuesday 29 June to Thursday 1 July 2021 in Perth.

The scholarships will be offered to applicants based in non-metropolitan regions of WA who may otherwise be unable to attend such a conference. The scholarship can be used to cover travel and/or accommodation costs.

For scholarship eligibility and to apply see [here](#)

### Priority groups for COVID-19 Vaccination Program: Phase 1B

This document shows in detail who will be vaccinated for COVID-19 under Phase 1b, based on recommendations by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.

- Elderly people – age 70 and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – age 55 and over
- Healthcare, Aged Care and Disability Workers
- Critical and High Risk Workers
- Licensed meat processing workers
- Household contacts of quarantine and border workers
- Specified underlying medical conditions
- Other eligible individuals

View the [PDF available](#) here for full details on each eligibility category

## Reporting vaccinations to the Australian Immunisation Register for persons without a Medicare Card number

The COVID-19 vaccination will be free for all people living in Australia. Individuals without a Medicare card can be vaccinated as long as they meet the current eligibility criteria, and can receive the vaccine from a GP led Respiratory Clinic or a state/territory vaccination clinic. A list of available GP led Respiratory Clinics and state run vaccination clinics will be found on the COVID-19 National Vaccination Information and Location Service.

It is now mandatory to report all COVID-19 and influenza vaccines given in Australia to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). This includes persons without a Medicare card number.

If a patient isn't enrolled in Medicare and they don't have an AIR record, you will need their:

- full name date of birth
- gender
- address

You can create a record on the AIR site or continue to send vaccines via practice management software and this will create a record that will match to their Medicare record if they enrol later in Medicare.

NB: For providers using Medical Director in conjunction with Pracsoft billing to report vaccination encounters, patients without a Medicare card number will not transmit to the AIR. This patient encounter will need to be reported through the AIR site.

Non-Medicare individuals can get their immunisation history statement through My Health Record if they:

- have an Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI). They can get an IHI by completing the Request or update an Individual Healthcare Identifier form (MS003)
- link or register for My Health Record. Further information is detailed on the [Services Australia](#) website.

## ATAGI statement on suitability of COVID-19 vaccination in people with history of clotting conditions

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) released a statement (25/03/2021) for health care providers on suitability of COVID-19 vaccination in people with history of clotting conditions.

Access the statement on the [Australian Government website](#).

Following the ATAGI statement of **19 March 2021** on the safety of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, ATAGI notes that the World Health Organization (WHO) and regulatory agencies including the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have been reviewing data from tens of millions of people given the AstraZeneca and other COVID-19 vaccines worldwide.

This shows that there is no increase in the rates of general thromboembolic disorders after vaccination over expected rates, noting these conditions occur commonly in the absence of

vaccination.

The EMA and others have also been conducting ongoing investigations in Europe regarding reports of a specific type of thrombosis (cerebral venous sinus thrombosis; CVST) following AstraZeneca vaccine.

It is not known whether this condition is linked to vaccination. Cases of CVST reported overseas have mostly occurred 4 to 14 days following the AstraZeneca vaccine and have been rare (varying reports of 1 to 8 per million doses of vaccine given). Further studies in these patients are ongoing to understand if there is a potential link with vaccination. No cases of CVST associated with vaccination have been recorded in Australia to date.

Overall, ATAGI emphasises that the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine far outweigh this potential risk.

Based on this information, ATAGI considers that there is no evidence of a risk of thrombotic disease after COVID-19 vaccination in people with a history of clotting conditions. ATAGI continues to recommend vaccination with either AstraZeneca or Pfizer (Comirnaty) COVID-19 in such people.

This includes those with deep venous thrombosis and/or pulmonary embolism; people with risk factors for thrombosis (such as use of oral contraceptives or smoking); people with thrombocytopenia (low platelets that can occur with clotting conditions); people with known thrombophilic disorders; people on anticoagulants (e.g. warfarin) and people with a history of cardiovascular disease (such as myocardial infarction or stroke).

However, for the time being, ATAGI recommends that vaccination with any COVID-19 vaccine should be deferred for people who have a history of the following rare conditions. This is until further information from ongoing investigations in Europe is available and is only a precautionary measure:

1. people with a confirmed medical history of CVST; and/or
2. people with a confirmed medical history of heparin induced thrombocytopenia (HIT). HIT is an immune-mediated complication of treatment with heparin that affects platelet function. A HIT-like mechanism is being investigated as a potential, but unconfirmed, pathway to CVST post COVID-19 vaccination.

As for all vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, health care providers should be alert for persistent, unexpected and/or severe adverse events following immunisation in their patients, particularly those that occur 1–2 weeks after vaccination.

ATAGI encourages health care providers and the public to **report any unexpected or serious adverse events** occurring following any COVID-19 vaccines. These should be appropriately investigated, and further advice sought from specialist services.

## Webinar: COVID-19 vaccine safety in focus

This webinar was held on 17 March 2021 as part of the 2021 National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance COVID-19 vaccine webinar series.

### View the video of this webinar to:

- take an in-depth look at COVID-19 vaccine safety
- hear about the latest global safety data for COVID-19 vaccines as well as new data from Australia

Expert panel members from Australia and the USA also answered several vaccine safety questions asked by the attendees.

The webinar can be viewed [here](#).

## Timeframes to access the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) via Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) and Provider Digital Access (PRODA)

Healthcare professionals and support staff are requested to transition to access the AIR site using HPOS and an individual PRODA account. Access to the AIR site using **authentication files will be switched off soon**.

PRODA is an online identity verification and authentication system and allows healthcare professionals to securely access government online services. Once a PRODA account is established, a number of services can be accessed, including HPOS and the AIR. Depending on the type of user, these services can be accessed either as an individual; a delegate of an individual or as a member of an organisation.

The Services Australia website provides further information and instructions on:

- [PRODA access and registration as an individual and an organisation](#)
- [Linking HPOS to your PRODA account and accessing the AIR](#)

**Important note:** If your organisation has already registered to use HPOS to access the AIR site, Authentication Files should **not** be used and must be deleted from practice personal computers.

Accessing the AIR site using HPOS provides improved security features designed to provide appropriate control over access to an individual's immunisation records. An Authentication File is deleted in the same way that a document or other file is deleted e.g. (if using Microsoft, right click on file, select delete, select Yes).

### Additional resources:

- [Supporting and understanding delegations in HPOS to enable access to the Australian Immunisation Register](#)
- [Accessing AIR using PRODA for Individuals](#)
- [Accessing AIR using PRODA for Organisations](#)

### Further support:

[PRODA](#) | 1800 700 199

[HPOS](#) | 1800 700 199

[AIR](#) | 1800 653 809 (general enquiries) | 1300 650 039 (AIR online helpdesk)

## COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance

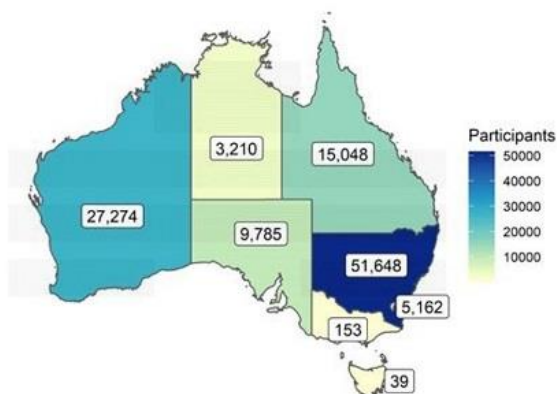
The national roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines commenced on 22 February 2021, and AusVaxSafety is conducting active vaccine safety surveillance of the vaccines in use. The vaccines currently being supplied are Comirnaty BNT162b2 (mRNA), sponsored by Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd, and COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, sponsored by AstraZeneca.

Surveillance data have been provided by Vaxtracker and SmartVax based on surveys sent on Day 3 after the vaccination, and data presented here are from surveys received up to 28 March 2021. These data are updated weekly.

As at 28 March 2021

### NO SAFETY SIGNAL DETECTED

116,748 surveys sent Australia-wide  
112,319 participants (67.4% response rate)



Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia are currently participating in AusVaxSafety COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance. Tasmania and Victoria will commence participation soon.

AusVaxSafety active vaccine safety surveillance system complements the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) enhanced safety surveillance activities. View the TGA COVID-19 vaccine weekly safety report [here](#). Find out more about how the TGA monitors the safety of COVID-19 vaccines and how you can report side effects on the [TGA](#) website.

## Meningococcal B vaccination - a guide for healthcare providers

The National Centre for Immunisation Surveillance and Research (NCIRS) have released a new resource titled '[Meningococcal B vaccination - a guide for healthcare providers](#)' to facilitate effective communication about meningococcal B vaccination.

View the resource [here](#).

## Choosing Wisely from NPS MedicineWise

Choosing Wisely is a global health initiative offering General Practice a suite of resources to enable clinicians and consumers to start important conversations about tests, treatments and procedures. A key objective of Choosing Wisely is to empower people to obtain the appropriate information and advice they need to make informed decisions about their healthcare, while at the same time supporting health professionals to initiate conversations that explore options, necessity and risks.

Choosing Wisely resources empower consumers to have the confidence to ask questions about their healthcare options, and support healthcare providers to create environments where consumers feel comfortable to do so.



For example, to help guide consumers and carers in knowing questions they can ask their health professionals, Choosing Wisely Australia promotes a list of '5 Questions to ask your doctor'. These are available in various formats and have been translated into 12 different languages.

To access Choosing Wisely resources, visit the NPS MedicineWise website: <https://www.nps.org.au/choosing-wisely.no>

## Better Health, Together: High performing general practices

In this month's Better Health, Together video, WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) CEO, Learne Durrington speaks with Dr Lyn Wren of Quinns Mindarie Super Clinic about her practice's reflections on their involvement in the Comprehensive Primary Care (CPC) program. The program aims to build high performing practices in Western Australia and create capacity and capability within practices to offer more patient centred care.

Watch the video [here](#).



### Comprehensive Primary Care

## Good News Story: Wirraka Maya Health Service and My Health Record

Wirraka Maya Aboriginal community health service has produced record results in the use of technology to ensure better connected care for local patients.

Over 2020, the Wirraka Maya Health Service uploaded the ninth highest number of Shared Health Summaries in Western Australia – this is a summary of a patient's key health information, and the highest number of Event Summaries in the state - this is a summary of a key consultation to My Health Record. Also, the health service has viewed more uploaded documents than any other primary care provider in Western Australia.

A key benefit to patients is that they can use the Shared Health Summaries and prescription information that have been uploaded by Wirraka Maya as proof of any underlying health conditions so they can obtain an early Covid-19 vaccination.

Senior Medical Officer at Wirraka Maya Health Service in Port Hedland, WA, Dr Yolande Knight said: "We rely on My Health Record to keep us updated on patient pathology, imaging, medication, dispensing and history records."

WA Primary Health Alliance General Manager, Primary Care Innovation and Development, Bernadette Kenny, said "This is the result of the whole team at Wirraka Maya working together and understanding the real benefits to their community when it comes to utilising the digital health services available to them. Their exemplary use of My Health Record ensures their clients are supported throughout their health journey both in the Pilbara and beyond by providing vital clinical information at a time when it is most needed."

To read more on this outstanding use of My Health Record click [here](#).



## New Doctor Training Scheme to boost bush GP numbers by 400 (FED)

Up to 400 general practitioners will train to work in regional Australia over the next four years, with the establishment today of the Coalition Government's Rural Generalist Training Scheme (RGTS) to boost doctor numbers in the bush. The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) will deliver the Government-funded \$49.7 million program, with ACRRM providing up to 100 Rural Generalist GP training places each year. Federal Regional Health Minister, Mark Coulton, said the end goal of the RGTS is for patients to have increased access to primary health services in rural and remote communities. "Rural and remote communities want safe and high-quality primary healthcare services delivered by well-trained GPs with training in an extended rural skill set," Minister Coulton said. Read the full media release [here](#).

## Extension of Telehealth Services & HealthDirect Video Call System

The Australian Government **announced** that it will extend support for telehealth services and care, along with MBS-subsidised telehealth to 30 June 2021.

Along with this announcement, we are also pleased to announce the extension of the healthdirect Video Call COVID-19 GP Program to 31 December 2021. This provides free Video Call access for general practitioners working in private practice and/or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

- The Department of Health has extended the healthdirect Video Call COVID-19 GP Program to 31 December 2021.
- For GPs in private practice wanting to start using the service, please **register** your practice. For GPs in ACCHOs wanting to start using the service, please **register** for access.
- RACGP CPD accredited training in healthdirect Video Call is now available for your practice

### RACGP Accredited Training

In collaboration with the RACGP, healthdirect is offering CPD courses that support GPs and Practice Managers to use Video Call more confidently and effectively. The following free courses are run by healthdirect RACGP Education Activity Representatives:

- **Essential Video Call training 1 hour 2 CPD points for RACGP or 1-hour ACCRM credit**

This module is for GPs new to Video Call and covers the basic functionality of the platform. The course will also suit Practice Managers who may be implementing telehealth into their practice workflows. **[Register here for essential training](#)**

- **Advanced Video Call training 1 hour 2 CPD points for RACGP or 1-hour ACCRM credit**

This module covers more advanced use of the platform. The course will also suit Practice Managers and anyone interested in how Video Call can reshape the provision of services to patients or clients. **[Register here for advanced training](#)**

For further information, or to register for access to the platform, please contact the **[healthdirect Video Call team](#)** or the **[WAPHA Digital Health Team](#)**

## Infectious Syphilis in Women Update

Professor Paul Kelly Chief Medical Officer, Australian Government Department of Health has released an important update regarding an increase in notifications of infectious syphilis in women of reproductive age in Australia.

Notifications of infectious syphilis among non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women of reproductive age have substantially increased, particularly in major cities of Australia, posing an increased risk of congenital syphilis and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

To read the full update click **[here](#)**.

## \$2.1 million to support Australians with diabetes

The Australian Government is investing \$2.1 million over four years, making it easier for Australians with diabetes to monitor their condition. From November 1, point-of-care glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c) tests will be listed on Medicare, funding 19,000 tests for Australians with previously diagnosed diabetes. Around one in twenty Australian adults have diabetes. The condition accounts for 11 per cent of all hospitalisations, which can result in a range of health complications, including heart disease, kidney disease, blindness and lower limb amputation. Monitoring patients with diabetes is vitally important and early detection and effective therapy can delay the onset and progression of diabetes late complications, resulting in better outcomes for patients.

Read the full announcement [here](#).

## Multi-language radio ads to promote Indigenous health checks

A major push to improve the health of the Indigenous community has been launched by the Australian Government, with a focus on increasing annual health checks.

Backed by a new radio advertising campaign delivered in five Aboriginal languages: Kriol, Yolngu Matha, Warlpiri, Arrente and Burarra, the Government is encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to see their GP and have a 715 health check.

The health check, listed as item 715 on the Medicare Benefits Schedule, is tailored specifically to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of all ages. It is free and available every nine to twelve months.

Read the full announcement [here](#).

## New DVA webpages

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is making it easier for health providers to comply with program arrangements with a new suite of helpful webpages.

Providers are also reminded to protect their provider numbers and ensure claiming is done correctly.

To read the update click [here](#) or visit the [DVA compliance webpages](#).

## Outpatient Reform Program

### Have you ever had the need to access outpatient services?

#### Community Conversation

Inform the Outpatient Reform Program about what the ideal outpatient experience should be from a consumer perspective. Please join one of the conversations at locations throughout the Perth metro area. View the flyer [here](#) for more information.

## GP Urgent Care Update

**GP Urgent statistics for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021:** over 600 patients have presented to the GP Urgent Care practices in the network, this is a positive outcome and reflect the hard work by practices promoting via webpages and booking portals.

### Benchmark Group

Training sessions commenced in March across Perth Metro, South West and Country Regions, consisting of online learning, face to face workshop delivery and post program student survey and summary.

In early March a successful Peripheral Intravenous Cannulation course was held at Technology Park Bentley. The course is evidence based with learning techniques designed to promote the best practice outcomes for patient care.

Feedback from participants on the day, demonstrated how informative the training they received and enabled them to feel confident to consolidate on returning to their practices.



There are some available places for GPs and Practice Registered Nurses on:

### Benchmark courses:

- Wound Closure - Included competencies are CWCAFC001 (Assess wound for closure), CWCPWC002 (Perform wound closure), and CWCPCC003 (Provide post wound closure care).
- Peripheral Intravenous (IV) Cannulation Program
- Cast application and immobilisation – non accredited
- Wound management

### Ctec - University of Western Australia

Ctec, University of Western Australia have been commissioned by WAPHA to facilitate a series of one day Wound Closure and Plastering courses for GP's and practice nurses treating patients under the GP Urgent Care Network Pilot.

One planned training session at School of Medicine, University of Western Australia.  
26 June 2021 – 12 places per course.

**\*Note for anyone attending the above courses, if you can't attend, please notify WAPHA prior to the course commencement with at least 5 working days' notice.**

All training information available on the WAPHA Webpage

<https://www.wapha.org.au/health-professionals/gp-urgent-care/>

Please complete your expression of interest via : <https://www.wapha.org.au/health-professionals/gp-urgent-care/>

### Interested in becoming part of the General Practice Urgent Care Network Pilot?

Any queries please email [urgentcare@wapha.org.au](mailto:urgentcare@wapha.org.au) or call Cheryl Bell on 0429 126 925

## Wellbeing support at hand during stressful times for WA general practice teams

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

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 when booking.**

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.

## Wrap-up of the Practice Management Workshop at the 2021 Rural Health West Conference



Over 30 GPs, GP's, practice managers, nurses and admin staff joined the Practice Assist team bright and early last Sunday at The Perth Exhibition Centre for their annual Practice Management Workshop.

Delivered as part of the 2021 Rural Health West 2021 Conference, the event provided participants with valuable knowledge, skills and support networks to build viable and sustainable businesses in rural Western Australia.

WA Primary Health alliance (WAPHA) Digital Health Team Leader, Simon Bengue updated the room on key digital health drivers including ePrescribing and telehealth. This was followed by an update on the latest COVID-19 vaccine information, then the top tips on implementing quality improvement activities from WAPHA Manager of Primary Care Transformation, Sam McMillan (pictured).

Congratulations to Rural Health West for an excellent conference. The event was a great success, not only providing participants with valuable information to take back to their practices but also a rare opportunity for attendees to collaborate with their country peers and share practice methodologies.



View the workshop presentations here:

- Digital Health
- Quality Improvement
- COVID-19 Vaccine Information Navigation

## AAPM COVID-19 Webinars

WA Primary Health Alliance have acquired access to four COVID-19 webinars from the Australian Association of Practice Managers (AAPM) which will be made available to practices approved to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine in Western Australia.

Topics for the webinars are:

- COVID-19 Vaccination and the path ahead
- Getting your Practice COVID-19 Vaccine ready
- Pandemic and future proofing your practice
- Innovate and Adapt your Practice

To register [click here](#).

## Health Promotion Events

### Pause 4 Parkinson's – With your help we can make an IMPACT

The 11th April 2021 is World Parkinson's Day and the Shake It Up Foundation invites you to help increase awareness and raise funds for Parkinson's research to support the 100,000 Australian's living with the disease.



There are so many ways to [get involved](#)! Have some fun and help us increase community awareness about Parkinson's disease and raise vital funds for research.



Pause 4 Parkinson's 2021 will highlight the impact that donors and fundraisers have made towards a cure for Parkinson's, the innovative research that has been funded and the continued impact for people living with Parkinson's.

For more information visit the [Shake It Up website](#) or [Pause 4 Parkinson's webpage](#)

Coming up soon...	
Go Blue for Autism	April 2
World Health Day	April 7
World Parkinson's Day	April 11
Wear Green for Premmies	April 13
World Immunisation Week	April 24-30
World Malaria Day	April 25

# 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.

Here are some of our new and updated resources:

## Clinical Resources

- Managing Drug Seeking Behaviour ([new](#))

## COVID-19 Resources

- COVID-19 Checklist Preparing Patients for vaccination at a different location ([new](#))
- COVID19 Vaccination for Nonparticipating practices ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Implementing a vaccination clinic checklist ([new](#))
- Phase 1b COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out through Primary Care Providers – Version 2 updates ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Journey Template ([new](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services GPs & OMPs ([updated](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Nurse Practitioners ([updated](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Mental Health ([updated](#))
- Medicare MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Chronic Disease ([updated](#))
- MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Quick Guide GPs ([updated](#))
- MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Quick Guide OMPs ([updated](#))
- MBS Covid-19 Telehealth Services Quick Guide Nursing & Allied Health ([updated](#))
- MBS COVID-19 Vaccine Suitability Assessment Items ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccination Checklist ([new](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker ([new](#))

## Digital Health

- Digital Health Services Fact Sheet ([new](#))

## Medicare

- MBS Items Frequently Used in General Practice Cheat Sheet ([updated](#))
- CDM Allied Health Group Services in RACF's ([new](#))
- CDM ATSI Allied Health in RACF's ([new](#))
- CDM Allied Health in RACF's ([new](#))
- CDM GP or OMP in RACFs ([new](#))
- Mental Health Treatment Plans (MHTPs) in RACFs ([new](#))
- MBS Attendance Items in RACFs Fact Sheet ([new](#))

## Nurses in General Practice

- Nurses in General Practice ([updated](#))

## Programs and National Schemes

- AIR Data Quality User Guide ([new](#))
- AIR 010A Report User Guide ([new](#))
- Supporting and understanding delegations in HPOS to enable access to the Australian Immunisation Register ([new](#))
- Recall and Reminder Letter template for cervical screening and follow-up ([new](#))
- Cervical Screening Flowchart ([new](#))

## General Practice Accreditation

- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreements ([updated](#))
- Free Interpreting Services for Medical Practitioners ([new](#))
- Retention and Destruction of Medical Records ([updated](#))
- Clinical Handover Policy Template ([new](#))

If you have an idea for a new resource or feedback on our current resources, please email [practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au) with ideas and comments.

## Education and training

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

### Webinars

**Learn how to assess and manage concussion**

Presented by Australasian College of Sport & Exercise Physicians

Multiple dates March to June 2021

### Workshops

**Cervical Screening for nurses**

Presented by Sexual Health Headquarters (SHQ)

Multiple dates

**COVID-19 Vaccination Administration and Monitoring using CAT Plus**

Presented by Pen CS

Tuesday 6 April

**Basic Life Support**

Presented by RACGP WA

Thursday 8 April

**Course in Ear and Hearing Health**

Presented by The Benchmark Group

Monday 19, Tuesday 20 & Wednesday 21 April

**Course in Ear Canal Microsuction**

Presented by The Benchmark Group

Thursday 22 & Friday 23 April

**Midwest-Gascoyne Health Professionals Network Launch**

Presented by Midwest-Gascoyne Health Professionals Network

Thursday 22 April

**Neurological Emergencies Workshop**

Presented by Rural Health West

Friday 7 May

**Certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health (Nursing)**

Presented by Sexual Health Headquarters (SHQ)

Monday 10 to Thursday 13 May

**Contraceptive Implant training for Nurses**

Presented by Sexual Health Headquarters (SHQ)

Thursday 13 May

**Paediatric Emergencies and Clinical Healthcare Scenarios (PEaCHS)**

Presented by Rural Health West

Friday 21 May

**Toxicological Emergencies**

Presented by Rural Health West

Friday 21 May

**Rural Remote Retrieval Weekend 2021**

Presented by Rural Health West

Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 May

**Obstetric Emergencies**

Presented by Rural Health West

Friday 11 June

**Rural Anaesthesia Down Under Conference 2021**

Presented by Rural Health West

Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 June

**Rural Obstetrics and Gynecology Forum 2021**

Presented by Rural Health West

Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June

**2021 Wound Management Workshops: Rural**

Presented by Clinical Design Solutions

Multiple dates (rural WA)

### Online Training

**Foundations of Spirometry in Primary Health Care**

Presented by APNA

**GP Framework for Child Mental Health Assessment**

Presented by Emerging Minds

**Diabetes in Practice for Nurses**

Presented by Diabetes Qualified

**Chronic Disease Mgmt Healthy Ageing Program**

Presented by APNA

**Electronic Prescribing online training**

Presented by ADHA