



Practice Connect

Latest news and updates

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Phase 1B General Practice Vaccine Rollout update

The National Cabinet met last week to discuss the recalibration of the COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

They agreed to a series of changes to the Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy. These changes include:

- Bringing forward the commencement of vaccinations for Australians 50 years and older
- Limiting the use of AstraZeneca vaccines to people 50 years and over
- Limiting the use of Pfizer vaccine to Australians under 50 years (with a few exceptions) until general availability later in the year as supply increases; and
- expanding the number of Commonwealth and state and territory-operated Pfizer vaccination sites as supplies increase.

For up to date information visit the [COVID-19 vaccination](#) information in HealthPathways or the [COVID-19 vaccination program Phase 1b](#) webpage.

WA COVID-19 Vaccination program for health care workers

The Government of Western Australia Department of Health has commenced clinics under the WA COVID-19 vaccination program. This program is available to employees who are at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19.

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WA COVID-19 Vaccination program for health care workers (cont)

As health care workers (Phase 1b) in general practice you are invited to book in for a COVID-19 vaccination via specific Department of Health WA vaccination booking portal.

Details of clinics are released by the Department of Health WA as they become available.

To make sure you receive information on these clinics subscribe to our [COVID-19 Update newsletters](#).

Federal Health Minister update – telehealth extended

Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced this week that the Australian Government will invest more than \$114 million to extend Telehealth services until the end of the year.

From March, 2020 to April 2021 more than 13.6 million patients accessed Telehealth and more than 83,540 providers have used Telehealth services.

Read more [here](#).

Updated factsheets will be available soon.

COVID-19 Vaccination Training - update

On Friday 23 April significant updates occurred in the COVID-19 vaccination training program. Module progress and completion have not been affected. You are expected to login and view the new information. A summary of the updates can be found in the announcement forum. All changes within the modules are identified by 'NEW' in red. You can log-in to the training modules [here](#).

Billing of MBS COVID-19 Vaccination numbers

The Australian Government Department of Health has advised that all MBS COVID-19 Vaccine numbers, including Suitability Assessment Service numbers, can only be accessed by general practices taking part in the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Further information can be found on the [MBS item notes page](#) on the Department of Health website.

Recording immunisation encounters in the AIR

It is now compulsory to record all COVID-19 and influenza immunisation encounters in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). With many flu and COVID-19 vaccines currently being recorded, it is important that the correct procedure for recording in the AIR is used. This resource from Services Australia provides an outline of the process along with links to other relevant resources.

Login to [PRODA](#) to access your [HPOS account](#). In HPOS, select **My programs** and then **Australian Immunisation Register**.

Once you've [identified an individual](#). Select **Record Encounter** from the left-hand menu.

To record the encounter:

1. Select **Who performed this immunisation encounter** from the drop-down menu.
2. then select the appropriate **schedule** and **enter the date of service**.
3. enter the episode detail including the **vaccine brand**, **batch number** and **dose** details. Some vaccines, including Astra Zeneca and Pfizer, have a lot number instead of a batch number. Enter the lot number when there is no batch number.
4. then select **Add** to record the encounter.

A message will display to let you know you successfully recorded the encounter and you'll also receive a claim ID.

View the education module to get help [recording an encounter](#).

Influenza vaccination during COVID-19 - FAQs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) have released a new resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - Influenza vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Download this new resource [here](#)

NCIRS Webinar: Australia's COVID-19 vaccine program reset: navigating safety, acceptance and uptake

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) have expanded their upcoming webinar to include the updated Australian Government plan for roll out of COVID-19 vaccines, and an update on thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

They will also discuss practical communication strategies for improving COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and uptake.

Date: Friday 30 April 2021

Time: 10:30 pm – 11:30 am WST

In this webinar:

- hear an update on the Australian Government COVID-19 vaccine roll out plan and what this means for immunisation providers
- hear further information on thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) and AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine
- learn practical strategies for communicating with your patients to increase vaccine acceptance and uptake
- have your questions answered by our panel of social scientists, medical specialists and general practitioners.

Register [here](#).

COVID-19 HealthPathways Updates

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

COVID-19 Vaccination Procedure

- Updated ATAGI advice on COVID-19 vaccination in patients with confirmed history or Cerebral Venous Sinus Thrombosis (CVST) or Heparin induced Thrombocytopenia (HIT).
- Updated warning signs of thrombosis drop box.
- Added Australian Department of Health resource - Weighing up the potential benefits against risk of harm from COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca resource under assessment section in vaccination in patients < 50 years and thrombosis risk.
- Updated advice on the investigation and management of patients presenting with suspected Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) also referred to as Vaccine induced Prothrombotic Immune Thrombocytopenia (VIPIT) under follow up section.



COVID-19 Vaccination Procedure

- Updated Clinical Editor's note to include information on ATAGI's recommendations for the use of AstraZeneca vaccine.

COVID-19 Assessment and Management

- Updated Practice Point to include advice on COVID-19 testing in patients presenting with acute respiratory symptoms, acute loss of smell or taste or fever post vaccination.

Newly Localised Pathways

- **Rash in Unwell Children**

To access HealthPathways please email the HealthPathways team at healthpathways@wapha.org.au

How do we move towards truly consumer-centred health care?

In the latest NPS MedicineWise podcast, NPS MedicineWise CEO Steve Morris interviews Leanne Wells, CEO of the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) following the recent CHF Summit - Australasia's inaugural consumer health summit.



They discuss what health organisations and health professionals need to do to move towards truly consumer-centred care,

- how we build equity in accessibility into digital enhancement and evolution,
- the role of health literacy and
- the role of medicines literacy in helping ensure people don't get left behind.

Listeners are also invited to join two upcoming virtual events: the National Medicines Symposium on 18 May and the 2021 Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting on 19 May. Read more [here](#).

WAPHA's GP Innovation Grants

Applications closed on Friday 23 April 2021

To support general practices across Western Australia, WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) has provided 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.

Grant applications closed on Friday 23 April 2021. Before purchasing IT equipment, you need to ensure that your practice's grant application has been approved via the [WAPHA portal](#) and an approval email will be received from WAPHA with a purchase order number.

Once your practice receives its approval email, you need to purchase the approved IT equipment and upload a tax invoice from your practice with proof of purchase receipt/s via the [WAPHA portal](#) by **Friday 21 May 2021**.

Please upload your practice's tax invoice with proof of purchase receipt/s as soon as possible to enable WAPHA to efficiently process your grant reimbursement payment.

Should you require any further assistance with submitting your tax invoice to WA Primary Health Alliance to enable your reimbursement to your practice, please email [Practice Assist](#) or call 1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 277 478).

Know Your Heart; a campaign to raise awareness of and encourage early diagnosis of heart failure

Improving outcomes for people diagnosed with heart failure is a key priority for WA Primary Health Alliance.

In 2015/16, 6,207 potentially preventable hospital admissions to Western Australian hospitals were due to heart failure, with an average length of inpatient stay of approximately 6 days.

At an estimated average cost of \$9,500 per episode, this represents a potentially avoidable cost of approximately \$59 million per annum for the hospital system.

Up to half of these admissions are estimated to be avoidable with improved management in primary care including self-management.

GPs are ideally placed to diagnose people with heart failure and provide effective treatments that reduce hospitalisations and save lives.

WA Primary Health Alliance has put in place a program of activities to support GPs, health professionals and patients.

The latest of these is a campaign to raise awareness among the community of the signs and symptoms of heart failure and to encourage people to seek help from their GP.

The **Know Your Heart** campaign directs people to further information about heart failure treatment and support developed by NPS MedicineWise who have also developed **resources for health professionals** to help identify patients with heart failure and provide effective life-saving therapy.

General practices can also **download and share the campaign resources** to share on their own channels, to raise awareness and encourage conversations with their own patients.



2021 Influenza vaccine orders

Standard [WA Health vaccine](#) website is now open for influenza vaccine ordering.

When placing new orders, please review order history, consider stock on hand, fridge capacity, and forthcoming COVID-19 vaccines, particularly when ordering Fluad® Quad (for persons aged 65 years and over).

A reminder not to book influenza vaccination clinic appointments until vaccines have been received.

For more information visit the [WA Health vaccine](#) website or Practice Assist [2021 Flu Vaccination Program](#).

NCIRS Influenza Vaccines – FAQ’s for patients

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) have a new fact sheet for patients that provides answers to common questions about influenza viruses and available vaccines, including the new influenza vaccine programs in 2021.

View the new factsheet [here](#).

NCIRS 2021 influenza factsheet

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) has developed a factsheet with key information about the 2021 influenza vaccines. The resource includes a summary of the vaccines available, recommended doses, age limits for the different vaccine brands, and more.

View the new resource [here](#).

Australian Immunisation Handbook updated for 2021 influenza

The Australian Immunisation Handbook has now been updated with all the relevant information for 2021 influenza vaccinations. The updated handbook contains advice on the new vaccines available, dosage and administration, contraindications, and more. View the newly updated section [here](#).

Australian Immunisation Handbook Survey

Folk, an independent consultancy, has been engaged by the Australian Department of Health to conduct research to better understand people’s perceptions and experiences of using the:

- **Australian Immunisation Handbook website,**
- **Australian Immunisation Handbook mobile app,** and
- **National Immunisation Catch-up Calculator (NICC).**

The online survey should only take **between 15-20 minutes** to complete. To get started, please click [here](#).

The findings from this survey and other research activities being conducted, will inform the Phase 4 development of the Immunisation Handbook website, mobile app, and the Calculator.

Survey closes COB on the 30 April

Palliative care workforce survey

The Australian Government Department of Health is currently undertaking a project to study Australia's palliative care workforce and project the demand for, and supply of, palliative care services into the future. As part of this work, HealthConsult has been engaged to analyse the composition of the palliative care workforce, undertake workforce demand and supply modelling and develop strategies to address findings. This analysis will directly support and guide future palliative care workforce policy and strategies.

Two surveys have been developed to inform development of the workforce model; one for organisations providing palliative care services and the other focused on members of this workforce delivering palliative care services. We would be very grateful if you could complete these through the web link(s) below:

- **PROVIDER SURVEY:** focuses on the setting in which palliative care is provided to understand the profile of organisations delivering palliative care services, the numbers of palliative care services delivered, details of the palliative care workforce employed at each organisation and issues relating to workforce recruitment for staff delivering palliative care
- **WORKFORCE SURVEY:** focuses on staff currently working within the palliative workforce to understand demographic details, qualifications and experience, role, location and type of service and intentions about continuing to work in palliative care.

Confidentiality

Please note that neither you nor your organisation will be identified in any reports or papers using information that is derived from these surveys. Your responses will be combined with those of all other respondents and the aggregated responses will form part of the overall data that will be provided to the Department of Health and will inform the workforce projections model.

Closing Date

The surveys will close on **7 May 2021**.

Assistance

If you need any assistance in completing the online survey please contact Erick Hansnata (email: erick.hansnata@healthconsult.com.au)

GP Urgent Care Network Pilot Update

WA Primary Health Alliance would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued commitment to the GP Urgent Care Network Pilot during an extraordinary time.

Delivery of A Frame GP Urgent Care signage to practices in the Network will commence next week starting the 4 May.

Practice Resource: [My Health Record – GP Urgent Care Workflow](#)

Benchmark Group

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

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

- 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 GP Urgent Care](#) webpage

Is your practice interested in becoming part of the General Practice Urgent Care Network Pilot? Please complete your expression of interest via [here](#) or email urgentcare@wapha.org.au

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 with any questions about the program.

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

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program Round Eight

Do you need to upskill to meet the health needs of your rural or remote community?

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP) is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health to improve access to health services in rural and remote areas by helping health professionals to pursue ongoing study and development.

Funding is available for health professionals who provide primary care services to Western Australian rural and remote Modified Monash Model (MMM) 3-7 locations in the fields of medicine, nursing, midwifery, dentistry or allied health, including Aboriginal health practitioners or workers. Training and upskilling of health professionals must help meet an identified health need in the community.

Eligible health professionals are invited to apply for Round 8 of the Health Workforce Scholarship Program. Applicants should read the Program Guidelines before applying, which is available on the [website](#).

Health Promotion Events

World Asthma Day 2021 – Uncovering Asthma Misconceptions

This year’s World Asthma Day theme is “Uncovering Asthma Misconceptions”. The theme provides a call to action to address common widely held myths and misconceptions concerning asthma that prevent persons with asthma from enjoying optimal benefit from the major advances in the management of this condition.

World Asthma Day is organized by the [Global Initiative for Asthma](#), a World Health Organization (WHO) collaborative organization founded in 1993

WHO recognizes that asthma is of major public health importance. According to WHO, it was estimated that more than 339 million people had Asthma globally and there were 417,918 deaths due to asthma at the global level in 2016.



Visit the [Global Initiative for Asthma website](#) for more information and resources.

Coming up soon...	
Crohn’s & Colitis Awareness Month	May 1-31
World Red Cross Day	May 8
World Lupus Day	May 10
Pneumonia Awareness Week	May 17-20
Schizophrenia Awareness Week	May 23-29
National Palliative Care Week	May 23-29

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 \(new\)](#)
- [How to access AIR through My Health Record and find a patient's immunisation history \(new\)](#)

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 with ideas and comments.

Education and training

Visit our Webinars & Workshops page at www.practiceassist.com.au for the events calendar.

Webinars & Workshops

Cervical Screening for nurses

Presented by Sexual Head Quarters (SHQ)
Multiple dates

Pathfinder: Early Career GP Conference 2021

Presented by RACGP
Saturday 1 May

Neurological Emergencies Workshop

Presented by Rural Health West
Friday 7 May

Certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health (Nursing)

Presented by Sexual Head Quarters (SHQ)
Monday 10 to Thursday 13 May

Effective Practice Security

Presented by AAPM
Thursday 13 May

Contraceptive Implant training for Nurses

Presented by Sexual Head Quarters (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

Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference

Presented by WA Department of Health
Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 May 2021

Rural Remote Retrieval Weekend 2021

Presented by Rural Health West
Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 May

WA Ear and Hearing Telehealth Forum 2021

Presented by Rural Health West & Partners
Friday 11 June

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

Education and training

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)

Joint Australasian Sexual Health and HIV&AIDS Conferences: VIRTUAL

Presented by ASHM
Monday 6 to Thursday 9 September

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

Electronic Prescribing online training

Presented by ADHA