

# Practice Connect

## Latest news and updates

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## Workforce Incentive Program for rural and remote areas

The Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) provides targeted financial incentives to support general practices to engage the services of nurses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and health workers, and eligible allied health professionals in rural and remote areas.

From February 2020, general practices and doctors participating in the Practice Nurse Incentive Program (PNIP) and the General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) will automatically transition to the WIP.

Better targeted incentives will address workforce maldistribution, giving patients in rural and remote areas improved access to quality medical, nursing and eligible allied health services. The WIP aims to strengthen team-based and multi-disciplinary models of care enabling collaborative arrangements to be put in place that will better support community needs. Under the WIP, the GPRIP will transition to the WIP - Doctor Stream and the PNIP will transition to the WIP - Practice Stream.

For further information on eligibility, rural loadings and payments, please visit:

[www.health.gov.au/workforceincentiveprogram](http://www.health.gov.au/workforceincentiveprogram)

For further information on practice location classification: [www.health.gov.au/doctorconnect](http://www.health.gov.au/doctorconnect)

## Communication materials to promote pertussis vaccination for pregnant women

The pertussis-containing vaccine is provided free to pregnant women through the National Immunisation Program.

The most important factor associated with uptake of vaccination during pregnancy is a healthcare provider recommendation. Please take all opportunities to speak to your pregnant patients and their partners about the importance of getting vaccinated against pertussis during pregnancy.

Please be reminded that the evidence around the timing of pertussis vaccination in pregnancy has recently been reviewed and the pertussis-containing vaccine is now recommended as a single dose between 20 and 32 weeks in each pregnancy, including pregnancies that are closely spaced to provide maximal protection to each infant. This advice is reflected in the Australian Immunisation Handbook at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au>

### Key messages

- Antenatal vaccination is recommended to protect both pregnant women and their babies from pertussis and its complications.
- Maternal antibodies against pertussis provide protection to babies until they have received at least two doses of pertussis containing vaccines (at six weeks and four months of age).
- Babies less than six months of age are at greatest risk of severe disease and death from pertussis.

Information for health care providers, including a clinical advice fact sheet and promotional materials are available at [www.health.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.gov.au/immunisation).

## Referring patients to My Aged Care just got easier

The Department of Health together with HealthLink has developed a new electronic referral process allowing GPs to refer their patients to My Aged Care directly from their practice management systems. After an initial pilot and some improvements based on participant feedback, the new e-Referral form can be accessed from within Best Practice, MedicalDirector and Genie practice management systems.

The e-Referral form is intuitive, easy to use and accessible through the patient's electronic medical record. By pre-populating patient information, the focus is on screening the patient, making it the quickest and easiest way to refer patients to My Aged Care. Once submitted, the e-Referral form is safely and securely sent to My Aged Care.

Information on how to access the new e-Referral form, including Quick Start Guides, is also available on the [My Aged Care website](#). For user and technical support or to enable access, contact HealthLink through their customer service email [helpdesk@healthlink.net](mailto:helpdesk@healthlink.net) or by calling 1800 125 036.

A new brochure called [After you've registered with My Aged Care](#) is also available to support patients with next steps once they have been referred. The brochure is available on the [My Aged Care website](#) and you can order it free through National Mailing and Marketing by emailing [health@nationalmailing.com.au](mailto:health@nationalmailing.com.au) or calling (02) 6269 1025 quoting code 150150.

## Accreditation tip: using data to improve clinical practice

### RACGP Standards for general practices 5th ed (QI1.3B)

With the introduction in August 2019 of the Practice Incentives Program Quality Improvement (PIP QI) incentive payment, the role of data in driving quality improvement has undoubtedly become a focus for many practices. The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Standards for general practices* includes reference to the use of data to improve clinical practice, requiring practices to “show evidence that you have conducted a quality improvement activity, such as a PDSA cycle or clinical audit, at least once every three years”. For practices participating in the PIP QI, this requirement is particularly pertinent.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) states that “quality improvement is an essential part of routine care, which involves making changes that will increase quality and safety for patients”, and accreditation itself is a quality assurance and improvement activity. However, to meet this indicator, your practice must be able to demonstrate that it utilises patient data to drive quality improvement, and the RACGP recommends some methods for achieving this.

Your practice may wish to participate in PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) cycles. This activity selects an area on which you want to make improvements and breaks it into manageable and measurable steps. PDSAs tend to be an ongoing cyclical process, where each build upon the learning and outcomes of the previous ones. They can often be completed relatively quickly, which can increase momentum for improvements, and can be undertaken by individual practitioners, or the whole team.

Alternatively, your practice may wish to undertake a clinical audit. Clinical audits are planned medical education activities in which your practitioners review their own clinical performance against best practice guidelines. Clinical audits involve an evaluation of care provided, followed by a quality improvement process. Clinical audits are available through the RACGP, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, and other clinical education providers.

Any area for quality improvement identified by your practice (including those not within the clinical scope) should ideally be recorded on a quality improvement plan or register. This allows you to identify and coordinate activities, assign them to your team members, record results and improvements, and share outcomes and learnings. Maintaining a quality improvement plan for your practice encourages ongoing, practice-wide engagement in the quality cycle.

There are other sources of information that your practice could utilise to analyse performance and determine quality improvement activities, including reports provided to you by your WA Primary Health Alliance Practice Support officer. If your practice is sharing data with WAPHA, we will provide you with a report based on an extraction from your clinical software, allowing you to see (as a practice) your compliance or achievement against certain benchmarks, including accreditation requirements. This allows you to identify areas for improvement, and target these as subjects for PDSAs or clinical audits, which will contribute to better patient safety and care, as well as forming part of the eligibility requirements for participation in the PIP QI incentive.

If you are not receiving data reports from WAPHA, please contact your Practice Support team member to discuss how we can assist you.

### Useful links

RACGP *Standards for general practices* 5<sup>th</sup> ed Indicator QI1.3B – Improving clinical care



## National Cancer Screening Register to commence supporting the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program in November

From 18 November 2019, the National Cancer Screening Register (the National Register) will begin supporting the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP).

The Australian Government's National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) is a population-based screening program, that aims to help detect bowel cancer early and reduce the number of Australians who die each year from the disease.

From 18 November 2019, the current NBCSP Register operated by the Department of Human Services, will transition over to the National Register to create a single national record for participants of the NBCSP and the National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP).

### The National Register will support the NBCSP by:

- Collecting and storing NBCSP bowel cancer screening data.
- Inviting and reminding eligible people to participate (through integration with the Medicare database).
- Distributing iFOBT kits to eligible participants (a free test kit that can be completed at home and mailed to the contracted pathology laboratory for analysis).
- Providing the State and Territory Participant Follow-Up Function (PFUF) access to the National Register to facilitate their support and follow up of positive iFOBT results.
- Providing information on participants to healthcare providers.
- Providing reporting on key program and operational outcomes for policy makers and key stakeholders to ensure appropriate safety, monitoring and evaluation of the Program.

### Additional functionality will be implemented in stages from March 2020, including:

- An online portal which will enable healthcare providers to access patient information and submit data electronically to the NBCSP and the NCSP.
- Integration with primary care Practice Management Software systems.
- Integration with whole-of-government services (e.g. MyGov, My Health Record) which will enable greater self-service options for people to manage their participation in both Programs.

### What you need to know:

Migration of NBCSP data will occur over November 15-17 and the National Register will commence operating the NBCSP Register from the morning of Monday 18 November 2019.

### National Register contact details:

From 18 November 2019, the National Register can be contacted for both NBCSP and NCSP-related purposes on the following:

- National Register Contact Centre: 1800 627 701 (operates Monday to Friday, between 8am and 6pm in all Australian state and territory time zones)
- Bowel Screening Fax: 1800 115 062  
Cervical Screening Fax: 1800 627 702
- Bowel Screening Post: Reply Paid 90965, Sunshine VIC 3020  
Cervical Screening Post: Reply Paid 90964, Sunshine VIC 3020

## NPS MedicineWise: Virtual Visits

NPS MedicineWise are funded by the Federal Govt to deliver free clinical education sessions to General Practitioners across Australia.

Their current topic: **Opioids, chronic pain and the bigger picture** offers guidance on how to assess when a short trial of opioids is appropriate, how to taper opioids with the support of non-pharmacological strategies, and when to seek support.

About NPS MedicineWise sessions:

- Discuss the latest evidence and guidelines in 30mins (1:1 with a GP), or please allow up to an hour for a small group of practice staff.
- Can be conveniently delivered by video conference direct to your GPs. You can nominate your preferred video conferencing technology (e.g. Skype, Zoom, Facetime, Scopia, GoTo etc.)
- Can be delivered at a time that suits your GP(s), be that before, during or after work hours.
- Are free, funded by the Federal Govt.
- Content is independent, evidence based, peer reviewed and accredited by RACGP and ACRRM.

For more information or to book a visit the NPS MedicineWise website:

<https://www.nps.org.au/cpd/activities/opioids?profession=GPs>.

## The Advance Project: Information sessions

Advance care planning is an important step in ensuring a person's preferences and values are known at the end of their life. General practice has an opportunity to start these discussions with patients because trust has already been established.

WA Primary Health Alliance is working with Hammond Care to support Western Australian general practices to implement a team-based approach to initiating advance care planning and palliative care into everyday clinical practice. The Advance Project is a practical, evidence-based toolkit and training package, specifically designed to support general practices to deliver team-based care.

The Advance Care Project would like to invite you to hold an information session for all practice staff. The event will be held at your location and convenience, where possible. The session will take 1 hour depending on questions you may have. If this is something you would be interested in, please speak to your WA Primary Health Alliance Liaison or Coordinator, or alternatively please contact The Advance Project Lead directly: [Roseanne.Adamson@wapha.org.au](mailto:Roseanne.Adamson@wapha.org.au)

Please click [here](#) to view **The Advance Project flyer** on these information sessions.



## Conclusion of payments for National Bowel Cancer Screening Program forms

In 2020, payments for Program forms will conclude. This will follow the November 2019 transition of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Register to the National Cancer Screening Register (the National Register) and the introduction of new register functionality, scheduled for release from March 2020.

These new functions include a Healthcare Provider Portal and the ability for practice management software to integrate with the National Register. This will remove the need for healthcare providers and specialists to submit paper-based Program forms.

Under current arrangements, Program form payments are administered by the Department of Human Services through the National Bowel Cancer Screening Register, with payments made monthly. From December 2019, the Department of Human Services payment capability will not be available. The Department of Health will collect the forms through the National Register and expect to make a once off lump-sum payment to healthcare providers who continue to submit Program forms from November 2019. The payment is likely to be made soon after March 2020.

### What do you need to do?

At this point, nothing. Please continue to submit Program forms as usual. You will receive further information on administrative arrangements in the coming months.

### More information

Updates and information about these changes are available at <https://cancerscreening.gov.au/bowel> or by calling 1800 118 868.

For information on the National Register visit <https://www.ncsr.gov.au> or call 1800 627 701.

## Heat Health

### Prepare for extreme heat this summer

Summer is fast approaching, and the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) is warning of increased odds of warmer than average days, coupled with a very dry landscape, which give a clear indication that we're likely to see more heatwaves than previously.

The health stress from extreme heat and heatwaves may result in death during a heat event but in many cases, this can occur well after it has passed. People with pre-existing or contributing health conditions are particularly vulnerable but extreme heat and heatwaves can affect anybody.

Research has shown that heatwaves can increase health problems dramatically. By being prepared for heatwaves people, especially the vulnerable, can take precautions in advance. Preparation helps those who work outside, those planning travel and those attending or participating in outdoor events.

### Useful Links for Health Professionals:

- Community information on heat health is available from the [Healthdirect](#) website
- During an extreme heat emergency, please visit [emergency.wa.gov.au](https://emergency.wa.gov.au)
- You can view further information via the [Department of Health - Healthy WA](#) website around [Heat](#) and other related resources

## Health promotion events

### World AIDS Day Australia is December 1

This World AIDS Day is held every year to continue to raise awareness across the world and in the community about HIV and AIDS. It is a day for the community to show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died of AIDS related conditions or other conditions associated with HIV.

The national World AIDS Day theme for Australia in 2019 is **Every Journey Counts**. World AIDS Day aims to encourage Australians to educate themselves and others about HIV; to take action to reduce the transmission of HIV by promoting prevention strategies; and to ensure that people living with HIV can participate fully in the life of the community, free from stigma and discrimination.

As a community and as individuals, there is a lot we can do in relation to HIV. Working in partnership with people with HIV, we can encourage others to understand how HIV is transmitted. We can support people to access testing, treatment and care, as we know that commencing treatment at the early stages of HIV results in better health outcomes and reduces the likelihood of onward transmission.

Show your support for people with HIV on World AIDS Day by wearing a red ribbon, the international symbol of HIV awareness and support.

For further information and resources on World AIDS Day please visit:  
<http://www.worldaidsday.org.au>

Coming up soon...	
<b>Decembeard</b>	1 December
<b>World AIDS Day</b>	1 December
<b>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</b>	3 December
<b>International Volunteer Day</b>	5 December

## Education and training

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

**Diabetes in Practice for Nurses**  
Presented by Diabetes Qualified  
Online learning

**AAPM: WA 2019 End of Year Networking Event**  
Presented by Australian Association of Practice Management  
Wednesday 20 November

**Pen CS – Topbar for Beginners**  
Webinar presented by Pen CS  
Thursday 21 November

**RACGP eHealth Webinar Series: Social media and the use of apps in general practice**  
Presented by RACGP  
Thursday 21 November

**Australasian Doctors' Health Conference**  
Doctors Health Advisory Service  
Friday 22 & Saturday 23 November

**Rural Emergency Assessment Clinical Training (REACT)**  
Rural Health West  
Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 November

**Pen CS - CAT4 for Beginners**  
Webinar presented by Pen CS  
Tuesday 26 November

**Hot Topics Series WEBCAST: Major changes in the prevention of heart failure, Travel medicine update, managing eczema, where are we at with menopause management?**  
Webinar presented by Healthed  
Tuesday 26 November

**Team Based Care and Data Driven Improvement**  
Presented by Train IT Medical & Katrina Otto  
Tuesday 26 & Wednesday 27 November

**Family & Domestic Violence During Pregnancy 2019 Symposium: Why antenatal care matters**  
The Women and Newborn Health Service  
Wednesday 27 November

**BreastScreen WA coming to Paraburdoo**  
BreastScreen WA  
Wednesday 27 to Friday 29 November

**Eating Disorders Essentials – Workshop for Private Practising Dietitians**  
Presented by West Australia Eating Disorders Outreach and Consultation Service (WAEDOCs)  
Thursday 27 November & Tuesday 3 December

**RACGP eHealth Webinar Series: Using personal mobile devices for clinical photos in general practice**  
Presented by RACGP  
Tuesday 3 & Thursday 5 December

**Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine update**  
Presented by Department of Health  
Thursday 5 December

**WA Rural Health Conference 2020: Beyond 2020**  
Health Innovations  
Rural Health West  
Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 March

**RACGP Practice Owners National Conference**  
Presented by RACGP  
Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 May

**APNA National Conference**  
Webinar presented by Pen CS  
Thursday 21 to Saturday 23 May

**Hepatitis C point-of-care (PoC) - Free set of online learning modules for community practitioners now available**  
Free set of online learning modules presented by The Australasian Society for HIV