



# Practice Connect

## Latest news and updates

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## Working remotely, but still here for you

WA Primary Health Alliance as one of the first organisations to move to remote working, we recognised the risk presented by busy workplaces to our staff and frontline health workers.

During this time, we have worked efficiently and effectively, and have been able to deliver and meet our organisational expectations and those of our many stakeholders.

For the practice support team, it has meant helping general practices through a time of disruption without visiting practices in person.

Most challenges that have come up have been overcome using technology, or simply by thinking and organising things a little differently.

There are practical reasons for keeping our distance, including the importance of not inadvertently exposing practice staff or GPs to anyone who might unknowingly be carrying COVID-19 or other viruses.

Given the immense importance of a well health workforce, it is incumbent on all of us not to put them at any greater risk, even if that risk is low.

For now, we will therefore continue to restrict face-to-face interactions. This will allow us to plan ahead and develop a way of working appropriate to the changed environment.

We want to ensure that practices remain — and feel — supported, so we are encouraging our practice support team to reach out to you using other channels to identify your needs and concerns.

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## Working remotely, but still here for you

While we are all looking forward to face-to-face contact in the future, we are considering many factors to make sure that when we do so, it will be as safe as possible for everyone involved.

While these issues are being worked through, working remotely remains the best option.

Our practice support team will keep you updated as we move closer to making these important decisions.

WA Primary Health Alliance has released a detailed FAQ on their approach to working remotely and planning ahead, that can be found [here](#).

For further assistance please contact your Primary Health Liaison or the Practice Assist team via email [practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au) or [1800 227 747](tel:1800227747).

## WA Department of Health COVID-19 asymptomatic testing

The DETECT Snapshot program testing is available from **Thursday 28 May 2020 to Wednesday 10 June 2020** (inclusive) for all eligible workers who do not have any symptoms of COVID-19.

This will invite people from identified groups in the community who show **no symptoms of COVID-19** to be tested for the virus to get a better understanding of any COVID-19 that may be in the community.

Eligible groups include:

- **Healthcare workers**, including WA Health staff, employees in private hospitals, residential aged care facilities, general practices, pharmacies, the disability sector, or any worker employed by an organisation delivering health services
- **WA Police staff**
- **Meat workers** employed in an abattoir, meat packing or in further processing such as small goods manufacture
- **Retail workers** such as employees in supermarkets, department stores and specialty stores
- **Hospitality workers** such as employees in cafes, restaurants, pubs or hotels.



Participation is voluntary for those who fall within one of these categories and are over 18 years of age. Testing is free and fully funded by the WA Department of Health.

Any member of the community who has symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, or flu like symptoms including coughing, sore throat and/or difficulty breathing should be tested at an approved [testing facility](#).

- Find further information [here](#)
- Download the fact sheet [here](#)
- Download the poster [here](#)

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## A message for your online booking page

With the current downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases and minimal community transmission, many practices are opening up for more face-to-face appointments.

Now is a good time to consider reviewing the messages your practice has been giving to your patients when they book appointments and / or visit the practice with regard to the appointments you can offer, as well as social distancing and infection control measures.

A great place to start if you accept online bookings is the webpage patients are directed to by the various online booking platforms.

It is important to ensure your message is clear, concise and friendly, given patients may be unsure and also slightly fearful about what to expect when making an appointment.



The following sample message can be adapted to suit your practice's requirements.

Our practice is now taking both in person and telehealth consultations which you are able to book online or by contacting the practice on XXXX XXXX.

**COVID-19 information:** Our priority is your health and the safety of all our patients and staff.

If you have a fever, cough, sore throat, headache, runny nose or difficulty breathing, before booking an appointment, please call our friendly reception team on XXXX XXXX.

They will advise you of the next step to ensure you get the best and most appropriate care.

For up to date information on the virus, call the Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 or visit [Healthy WA Coronavirus website](#).

There are many communication tools now available to reassure and engage your patients, which you can access below.

- WAPHA [See Your GP](#)
- RACGP [Expert Advice Matters](#)
- WAGPET [Stand by your GP](#)
- AHCWA [Scared of Going to the Doctors](#) poster
- WACHS, AHCWA, Minderoo Foundation [Mary G animations](#)

## New multilingual COVID-19 mobile app: MyAusCOVID-19

Migration Council Australia has developed a free multilingual mobile app for Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities about COVID-19, its impact and available support.

With over 1 million people who speak little or no English and over 5 million who speak a language other than English at home, Australia's diversity presents challenges in communicating public health information.

The app is available in 24 languages and can be downloaded from the Apple Store and Google Play.

Read the full announcement [here](#), or download a poster for your practice [here](#).

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## Update: Electronic Prescribing

Electronic Prescribing 'ePrescribing' will allow for fully digital scripts to be sent to a patient, removing the requirement for paper scripts for those practices who choose to use the system. The WA Primary Health Alliance Practice Support team will be contacting all practices with a checklist of requirements to help ensure that they are prepared to start using ePrescribing when it is released, including:

- Connected to the HI Service with a Healthcare Provider Identifier – Organisation 'HPI-O' number
- Maintain a current National Authentication Service for Health 'NASH' certificate
- Connected to a Prescription Exchange Service using eRx or MediSecure
- Using the most up to date version of your clinical software

Additionally, as ePrescriptions are sent either via SMS or email, you may wish to confirm these details with your patients.

For further information on ePrescribing, please visit the [Digital Health site](#) or the [Practice Assist 'Electronic Prescriptions'](#) page for further information and frequently asked questions.

Alternatively for further assistance please contact the My Health Record Team by email on [myhealthrecord@wapha.org.au](mailto:myhealthrecord@wapha.org.au).

## BreastScreen WA uploading mammogram results to My Health Record

BreastScreen WA has become the first breast screening service in Australia to connect to the My Health Record system, allowing women to see their mammogram results as soon as their test is assessed.

The service has been providing results to women electronically since last year [through a portal](#), allowing them to download a PDF version. They can also choose to receive either an SMS or a letter, and their GP is also kept informed electronically if the patient consents [\[read more\]](#).

For further information about My Health Record please email the team at [myhealthrecord@wapha.org.au](mailto:myhealthrecord@wapha.org.au).

### Health Direct Video Call

WA Primary Health Alliance 'WAPHA' continues to support the use of Telehealth by Western Australian healthcare providers by providing free access to the HealthDirect Video Call platform. To date, 170 practices have registered to use the system, and over 1,800 hours of consultations have been held using the platform.

WAPHA continue to support practices who wish to register for HealthDirect, and more information as well as a link to register, may be found on the [Practice Assist website](#).



## APNA Transition to Practice Program: applications extended to Friday 19 June 2020

The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association 'APNA' is seeking applications for transitioning nurses and clinical and professional mentors for the Transition to Practice Program. The APNA Transition to Practice Program will deliver an accessible, structured 12-month transition support program with 10 months of intensive clinical and professional mentoring.

The aim of the APNA Transition to Practice Program is to increase the confidence, competencies, skills and knowledge of nurses commencing work in primary health care settings.

Further information including selection criteria, program overview and funding arrangements can be found on the [APNA website](#).

## Pen CS release of Research app in Topbar

Pen CS has released a Research app in Topbar on Tuesday 5 May, which offers both practices and clinicians the opportunity to participate in eligible research studies.



The value of this Research app for the health sector lies in the app's ability to inform health professionals about the:

- Opportunity to participate in research studies that improve patient outcomes
- Opportunity for provider education, in some studies
- Remuneration for participation in research studies to recognise Practice time and involvement
- CPD points for select research studies
- Promotes GP-led research in primary care

For further information, please visit the [Pen CS CHIME-GP Research Study](#) website.

## Record flu vaccines in 2020 to protect Australians

An additional two million flu vaccines will be available Nationally from this week bringing the total number available in 2020 to a record 18 million.

This is up from 13.2 million flu vaccines in 2019 and 11 million in 2018, and almost 10 million more than the 8.3 million flu vaccines provided in 2017.

More than 7.3 million flu vaccines have already been administered by doctors and pharmacists and entered into the Australian Immunisation Register this year. This compares to 4.5 million doses administered and entered for the same period last year, and over double the 3.5 million in 2018.

Please remind your patients who are not yet vaccinated, that it is not too late to do so. Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and is recommended for all people aged six months and over (unless contraindicated).

Click here for further information on the [WA Influenza immunisation program](#).

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## Safer Baby Bundle initiative to help women and healthcare workers recognise risk factors for Stillbirth during COVID-19

The Safer Baby Bundle initiative have produced an infographic for women, and a fact sheet to help women and GPs recognise risk factors for Stillbirth during COVID-19, and action that can help reduce these risks.

They also have a free e-learning resource that GPs and midwives can do online [here](#).

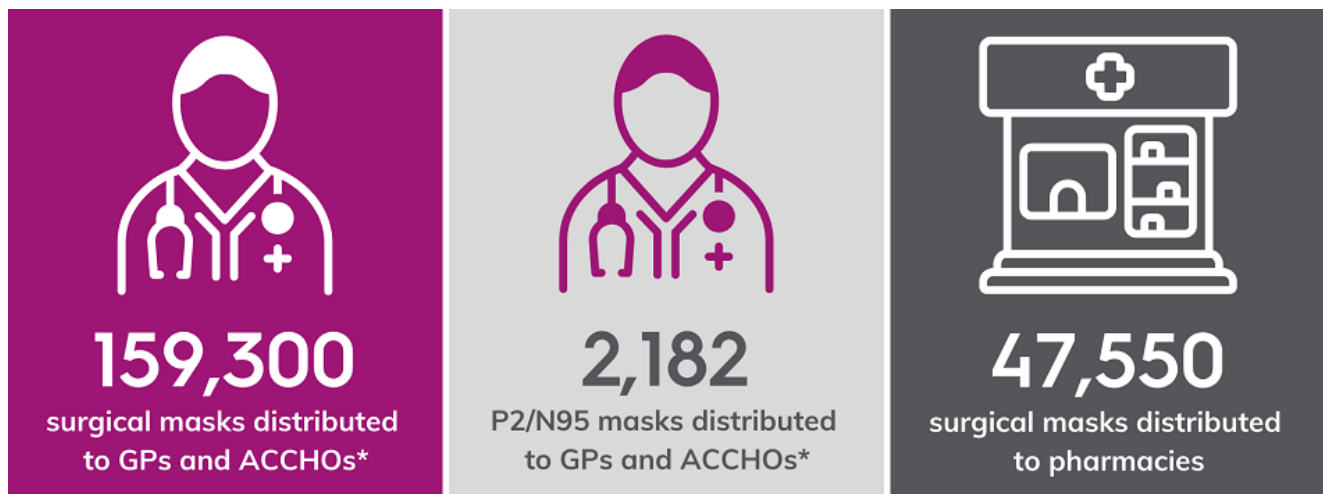
Download the fact sheet [here](#).

Download the infographic [here](#).

## 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 practices and pharmacies. We are pleased to announce that we have recently expanded our mask distribution to include allied health practices that meet the criteria of the [Department of Health Tranche 4 guidelines](#).

To date we have distributed 159,300 surgical masks to GPs and ACCHOs, 2,182 N95 masks to GPs and ACCHOs and 47,550 surgical masks to pharmacies.



\*Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

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).

## New Telehealth Items for COVID-19 from 22 May 2020

### Specialists

New MBS items have been introduced for telehealth and telephone services for anaesthetists:

- 92701 and 92712 - these mirror the existing service 17615

### Dental practitioners practising oral and maxillofacial surgery

New MBS items have been introduced for telehealth and telephone services:

- 54001 and 54002 - these mirror the existing service 51700
- 54003 and 54004 - these mirror the existing service 51703

### Allied health – dieticians

New MBS items have been introduced for telehealth and telephone services:

- 93284 and 93286 - these mirror the existing service 81120
- 93285 - this mirrors the existing service 81125

More information can be found by visiting [MBS Online](#) or visiting the Practice Assist 'COVID-19 Telehealth' page.

## Phase 3 of COVID-19 roadmap from 6 June

The WA Government has announced Phase 3 of the roadmap to ease COVID-19 restrictions in WA, with significant changes coming into effect from Saturday, June 6. This is due to success in limiting community transmission of COVID-19 in WA during Phase 2, and on the advice of the Chief Health Officer and State Emergency Coordinator.

As part of Phase 3, Western Australia will be the first State in the nation to implement a two square metre per person capacity rule for venues, replacing the previous four square metre rule, which is the current national advice.

Western Australians must continue to practice physical distancing and good personal hygiene at all times.

Read the full statement [here](#).

### Launch of Stay COVID free - Do the 3 campaign

A new campaign has launched to remind all Australians to be COVIDSafe by washing their hands, keeping their distance and having the COVIDSafe app.



Please visit the [COVIDSafe app campaign resources](#) page for further practice resources and posters. To watch the video please click [here](#).

## COVID-19: Child Assessment and Management pathway now available on HealthPathways

The [Child Assessment and Management pathway](#) has now been published on the HealthPathways site and contains information on how to assess, manage and refer suspected cases of COVID-19 in children.

### COVID-19 HealthPathways Updates

The following content updates have now been published on the following pathways:

#### COVID-19 Assessment and Management

- Information updated based on new clinician alert and testing criteria.
- Added information regarding specimen collection for SARS-CoV-2.
- Updated Infection control recommendations including appropriate use of PPE, contact and droplet precautions and aerosol generating procedure (APG) as per current local guidelines. This was also updated on the [COVID-19 Practice Management pathway](#).
- Added information of potential symptoms in elderly patients.
- Updated information regarding investigations.

#### COVID-19 Telehealth

- Further information on digital prescriptions.

#### COVID-19 Impact on Local Services

- Updated allied health information for Rockingham General Hospital.

A COVID-19 note was added to the following pathways to highlight temporary legislation for digital image of prescription.

- [Schedule 4 Medicines](#)
- [Schedule 8 Medicines](#)
- [Authorisation to Prescribe Schedule 8](#)
- [Prescribing Schedule 8 Medicines](#)

The COVID-19 notes on the following asthma pathways have been updated to include advice from peak bodies on how to manage asthma during COVID-19:

- [Acute Asthma in Children](#)
- [Non-acute Asthma in Children](#)
- [Acute Asthma in Adults](#)
- [Non-acute Asthma in Adults](#)

**HealthPathways WA**

#### Opioid Substitution Treatment

- A COVID-19 note has been added with a link to the RACP interim guidance for treatment during COVID-19.

#### Depression in Older Adults

- A COVID-19 note has been added to highlight the new Older Person's COVID-19 Support Line available.

Please email [healthpathways@wapha.org.au](mailto:healthpathways@wapha.org.au) for login details if you do not already have access to HealthPathways.



## Reminder: Annual updates on DoctorConnect - Distribution Priority Areas/District of Workforce Shortage

The annual update to the Distribution Priority Area (DPA) and District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) for specialists will occur on 1 July 2020. Further details about these classification systems can be found at: [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/distribution-priority-area-fact-sheet](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/distribution-priority-area-fact-sheet).

The updates will be available to view on <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/health-workforce-locator> from that date.

For further information and enquiries please email [Rural.distribution@health.gov.au](mailto:Rural.distribution@health.gov.au).

## COVID-19 Cancer Patient Experience Survey

The Department of Health WA would like to gain an understanding of how COVID-19 may have impacted the experience of patients across the cancer care pathway, from diagnosis to treatment, survivorship and end of life. GPs are encouraged to promote this survey among their cancer patients to increase understanding of variations in the Western Australian experience of cancer care and to identify areas across the cancer care pathway that potentially need to be addressed during or following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Survey and further information via the following link: <https://consultation.health.wa.gov.au/wa-cancer-and-palliative-care-network/covid19-cancer-patient-experience/>.

## It's time to celebrate excellence in general practice: RACGP Awards now open

Do you know an extraordinary GP, GP in training, GP supervisor, or general practice going above and beyond?

GPs receive all kinds of acknowledgements from their patients, but it is important to formally celebrate this work and dedication to holistic patient care.

The RACGP Awards focus on exceptional individuals in Australian general practice for their outstanding achievements and contribution to the health of their community.

Nominations are now open for the 2020 RACGP Awards. If you know an extraordinary GP, GP in training, GP supervisor, or general practice going above and beyond to improve the health of their community, nominate them for an award today. Visit the RACGP website to [nominate now](#).



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## Correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To help keep your patients and staff safe during COVID-19, it is important to follow the recommendations for the correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

For a step-by-step guide about the correct use of PPE, please refer to [this fact sheet](#) from the Western Australian Department of Health, and their [instructional video on donning and doffing PPE](#).

If you would like to display posters in your clinic about infection prevention and control in the COVID-19 environment, the [Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Healthcare](#) has produced the following new resources:

- Infection prevention and control – personal protective equipment
- Precautions for COVID-19 designated zones

[Break the chain poster](#) for use in clinical areas & waiting rooms

[Infection Prevention and Control Standards](#), and a [video series on PPE use and hand sanitising](#), are also available through the RACGP.



HealthPathways also has information on PPE available on the [Practice Management pathway](#).

## Nominations: WA Primary Health Alliance Councils and Committees

WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by a governance structure of councils and committees as we look system-wide at gaps, identifying ways to improve important primary care services and encourage innovation in the delivery of care.

The councils and committees have a core purpose to support health care integration, strengthen collaboration and increase transparency. They assist us in progressing our [key priorities](#) and help us listen to local communities to understand who they are, their unique health needs, and the ways in which their world is changing.

Clinical Committees in each of the seven country regions, and Clinical Councils in metropolitan Perth, have membership from health professionals, allied health practitioners, medical administrators, hospital executives and clinicians from all areas of primary care.

### Nominations

Are you ready to use your knowledge, experience and networks to support healthcare integration in your region? Nominations will open Friday 8 May and close 17:00 on 8 June 2020.

For further information please click on the ['Nominate Here Button'](#).



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## Changes to Genetics Services of WA inward referral process

Since February 2020, Central Referral Service (CRS) is the preferred method of referral to Genetics Services of WA (GSWA) for general practitioners, private specialists and clinicians under WACHS.

### General Practitioners, Private Specialists and WA Country Health Service clinicians: Non-immediate outpatient referrals

Referrers will need to **complete one of the standardised referral forms** and send it to the Central Referral Service (CRS) via:

**Fax:** 1300 365 056

**Healthlink Secure Messaging:** crefserv

**Postal address:** PO Box 3462 Midland WA 6056

### Immediate referrals (seen within 7 days)

Please refer to instructions under 'Public Metropolitan Health Services' below.

Please note that if the referral is deemed as 'non-immediate', the referral will be rejected, and the referrer will be advised to resend the referral via CRS.

### Public Metropolitan Health Services

A referral letter or consult request should be sent to GSWA specifying the reason for referral and referring doctor's name and address.

Include the following patient information:

- full name (including maiden name if relevant)
- current address and contact details
- date of birth
- relevant personal or family history
- other medical information that may be relevant
- copies of relevant test results.

Please make sure the patient completes the **family history questionnaire (PDF 261KB)**.

Please ensure that the client is informed of the referral to GSWA. Once the referral has been received, a genetic counsellor will contact the client to obtain further details and arrange an appointment.

If you are considering a referral, please read the **referral guidelines for clinicians**.

GSWA consent forms can also be filled out prior to the client's appointment:

- **Consent to release medical information (Word 100KB)**
- **Permission to release information to/from GSWA (Word 69KB)**

Genetics Services of WA's referral criteria remain unchanged. For a full list of referral criteria, please visit their **website** or call them on (08) 6458 2723 between 8.30am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

For more information on how to refer to Genetics Services of WA using the Central Referrals Service, please contact the Central Referrals Service on 1300 551 142, visit their **website**, or visit the **Genetics Services Requests** pathway on **HealthPathways**.

## Health Promotion Events

### June is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Bowel cancer is **Australia's second deadliest cancer** and claims the lives of 103 Australians every week (5,375 people a year) - but it's one of the most treatable types of cancer if found early. 300 Australians will be diagnosed with bowel cancer this week (15,604 people a year).

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) invites eligible people starting at age 50 and continuing to age 74 (without symptoms) to screen for bowel cancer using a free, simple test at home. AIHW participation data (2018) recently published for WA shows kit return for eligible patients aged 50-74 was only 43.8 %.

### How can general practices support participation?

Research consistently demonstrates that a recommendation from a primary care provider to screen for bowel cancer is an important motivator for participation. General practices can encourage their patients to participate by:

- **Displaying** brochures, flyers and posters – [Order Program Resources](#)
- **Talking** to patients aged 50-74 years about bowel cancer screening - [Download Clinical Resources](#) or [check when an individual will get a kit](#)
- **Demonstrating** how to use a kit. Demonstration kits can be ordered by [emailing NBCSP@health.gov.au](mailto:NBCSP@health.gov.au)
- **Sending** a letter to 49 year old patients to encourage participation - [Download a template letter](#)
- **Knowing** the Program – this series of [short videos](#) provides a simplified approach to the NBCSP covering the following topics: What is screening, Classification of risk, Referral to colonoscopy and Case studies. For practice nurses this [Webinar](#) is a one-hour online seminar on bowel cancer, screening and how nurses working in general practice can approach bowel screening with patients
- **Download** the [Promoting the NBCSP in General Practice](#) fact sheet for tips on how to support the Program.

Coming up soon...	
<b>Crazy Socks 4 Docs</b>	5 June
<b>Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Awareness Month</b>	June 1-30
<b>Orthoptic Awareness Week</b>	June 1-5
<b>Haemochromatosis Awareness Week</b>	June 1-7
<b>Heart Rhythm Week</b>	June 1-7
<b>Infant Mental Health Awareness Week</b>	June 11-17
<b>World Blood Donor Day</b>	June 14

## Webinars and online training

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

### Webinars

**Healthdirect Video Call Familiarisation Webinars**

Presented by Healthdirect

[View a recorded session here](#)

**Virtual Community of Practice: COVID-19 Future proofing general practice - chronic disease strategies**

Presented by WAPHA

Thursday 4 June

**AAPM: Reception – The Juggling Act**

Presented by AAPM

Thursday 4 June

**Baby Steps: Online Post-gestational diabetes type 2 prevention program**

Presented by Diabetes Telehealth

Monday 8 June

**Staying SANE in the Pendem-onium**

Presented by Diabetes WA

Monday 8 June

**Hepatitis C Case Finding for Practice Nurses**

Presented by ASHM

Friday 10 June

**Meeting the requirements and managing the challenges of physical distancing during COVID-19 in your Practice**

Presented by AAPM

Wednesday 11 June

**RACGP: Care Planning During a Pandemic**

Presented by RACGP

Thursday 11 June

**Staying SANE in the Pendem-onium**

Presented by Diabetes WA

Monday 22 June

**Practice owner's webinar: Navigating a rent reduction – Does Sco Mo's code apply to me?**

Presented by Health Project Services and

RACGP

On demand

### Online Training

**COVID-19 Infection Control Training**

Presented by Department of Health

**Chronic Disease Management and Healthy Ageing Program**

Presented by APNA