



WA GP ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING COMMUNIQUE

WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 2022

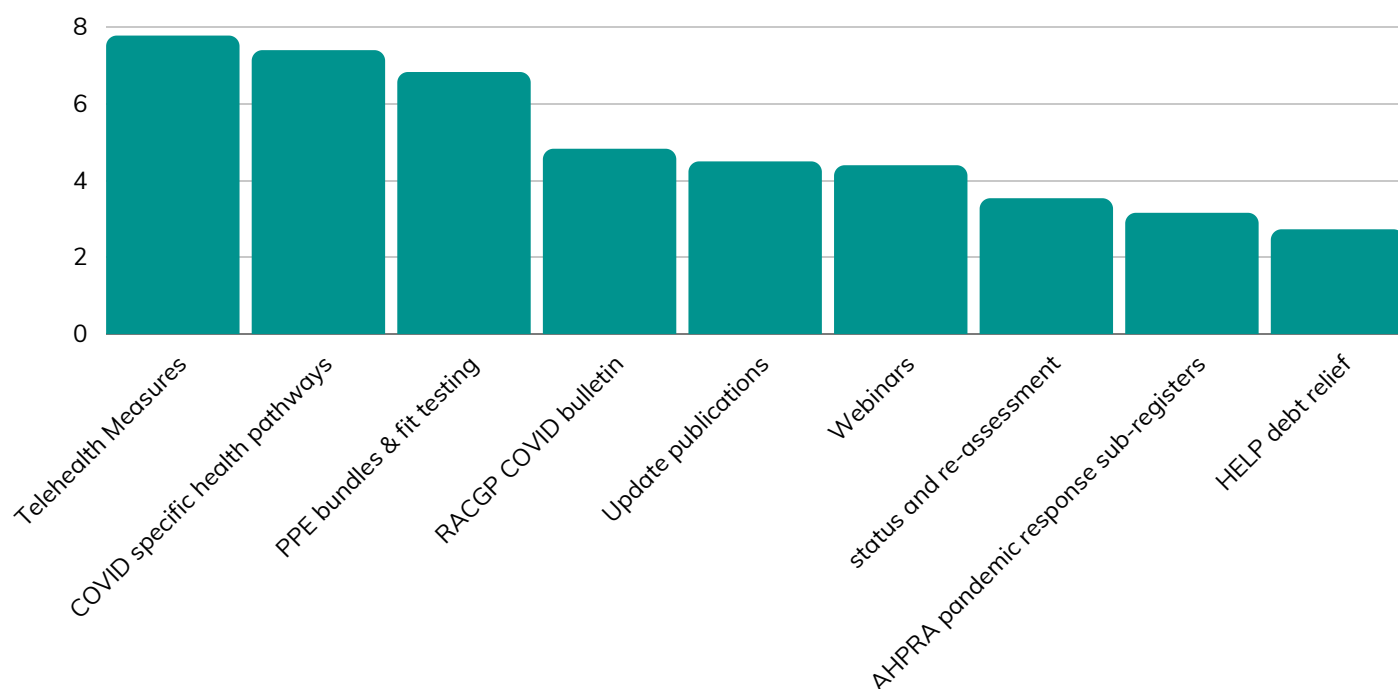
TOPIC ONE

COVID-19 and Workforce Management

RACGP WA, WA Primary Health Alliance and Rural Health West can help support you around your workforce needs and requirements. There are a number of initiatives and programs currently in place to support your practice with its response to COVID-19.

The poll, sent in advance, asked panel members to rank a range of these programs and initiatives in order from most to least helpful.

Please rank the following workforce incentives from most helpful in addressing your workforce concerns, to least helpful.



"In remote areas we don't have good internet connections. We struggle to identify the best phone number to contact the patient on. Often it's not their own phone number, it's that of a family member. So the use of more advanced tech like the video platforms simply isn't an option here for us for a lot of our patients"

"We see a lot of elderly people and many are not confident with the phone or video."

"We have doctors in isolation, it's a struggle with consulting from home and organising the referrals and other paperwork that goes along with consultations – how can that be made easier?"

"It just seems a shame that Care Plan numbers are still only available for video calling but not telephone calling."

"Telehealth MBS items don't discriminate between nursing home patients and non-nursing home patients, which I think should be an important point, considering it can impact on GP and practice revenue."

"It would be great to have some uniformity in telehealth platforms, there are so many different platforms for GPs and patients."

"A ready-made guide for managing the isolation room would be useful: what we put in there, the cleaning protocols and so on. We had to work that out but it should be a common task for all surgeries."

WAPHA has passed that specific request to the COVID 19 Communications Team for inclusion in their resource development plans
These resources from RACGP may be of relevance to practices here.

"We need ongoing training and awareness regarding telehealth, e-scripts and so on - for both doctors and patients."

"The vaccine training program takes a lot of time to do properly. Are WAPHA and RACGP in a position to advocate on behalf of GPs that this vaccine training program needs to be designed for GPs – respecting their existing professional skill and knowledge?"

RACGP will continue its advocacy to get training that respects a GP's skills and knowledge. Advocacy on this has been unsuccessful to date.

"Overall there is an issue of having to balance the general public and GP's general information that's true for everyone, but then still maintaining a space for practice individuality and variation that works in certain situations"

"There are resources on the Practice Assist website that might assist with setting up telehealth (both telephone and video)."

"We are going to need some more information on Antivirals as they as they come on stream in the next few weeks.

The Pathway is there, and I can read it, but it's still pretty complex. Hopefully that can get easier as time goes on."

"I'm overall really impressed with the HealthPathways, I think they've been fantastic with their COVID information and really good updates.

Can we ask HealthPathways to open PDFs on the web page rather than downloading them?"

This feedback is being used by the HealthPathways team to inform the continuous improvement of the site and to close the loop back to staff to acknowledge their work is being used and appreciated.

"COVID is amplifying the general cracks in the health care system."

"Need for WAPHA, RACGP and Rural Health West to keep reminding WA Health and the WA hospitals sector about the restrictions on GP billing."

These priority needs will be used to inform the work in progress by WAPHA, Rural Health West and RACGP on resources for general practice.

Current resources available are:
Rural Health West Resources,
RACGP Resources
and Practice Assist Resources.



"We work in one of the Respiratory Clinics, so we are already in contact with a lot of COVID positive patients on a daily basis. We only got our fit testing done a week ago. We sourced a selection of six different masks and I was told at the end of an in depth series of tests that none of them were suitable for me. They couldn't give me any further advice."

"The fit testing has to be the biggest issue that I have at the moment and I think it illustrates hugely the disparity between primary care and our colleagues in the hospital."



"There is a wide discrepancy in how practices see patients. Some Medical Centres are open for all patients - with the GPs wearing masks, some see only asymptomatic, double vaxed patients, where some medical centres have all their staff in full PPE, N95, gown, faceshields etc. some practices decline seeing symptomatic patients with a negative RAT, insisting on COVID PCR.... this variation is confusing for patients and GPs."

"We need to be considering Re-cyclable PPE masks – there are long term environmental impact of disposable masks."



"We only had fit testing last week but they only fit tested the three masks that we had been able to source up until that point."

TOPIC TWO

Supporting patients to
engage with GPs during
COVID-19

WAPHA will develop a public awareness social media campaign and resources to support people to continue to engage safely with their GPs during COVID.

What top messages do you want your patients to know that we can promote via the campaign and resources?



"We have options for telehealth - just ask reception to help you navigate this."



"Please continue to bring your child for routine vaccinations."



"When to see your GP and how and perhaps giving some examples of things that are appropriate for face to face and those that are appropriate for telehealth because we found a lot of patients not really realising what can be done over telehealth and what can't."



"Don't wait until it's too late - See your GP."



"You must wear a mask over nose and mouth in the practice – it's for the benefit of your GP because if they get sick the health system will fall over. It's import to look after GPs so they can keep working and seeing patients"



"Life goes on - Screening, skin checks, and pap smears are important."

What top messages do you want your patients to know that we can promote via the campaign and resources? (cont.)



"Pointing out that not all practices are the same, and whether that is something that's explicitly stated or implied in the variety of options that are put forward as examples."

"Be respectful to practice staff."



"You can receive help from your general practice even if you have respiratory symptoms but please help protect everyone by following triage systems at your practice."

"We are open for business. Don't neglect your normal healthcare."



"Your visit may look different but you'll still be seen. It may be in a carpark, or maybe isolation room or you may be triaged by phone first and that that's appropriate and necessary."

"Practice staff safety comes first and patients don't have an entitlement to enter a practice – note that you may be triaged on arrival."



How could resources such as social media content, website page content, FAQs, and flyers help your practice communicate this message to your patients?

"Culturally appropriate material is important."

"Disability accessible information is important."

"Fully utilise digital resources."


"Giving us web and social media content such as;

- YouTube videos
- Infographics
- PDF's for patients."

"Use Tonic Health Media screens in practices."

"Recording for on-hold messaging."

"A directory of online media that can be accessed from one place - currently we end up looking around from different sites/resources."



TOPIC THREE

COVID-19 guidelines for healthcare practices in the community in high and very high caseload environments

WA Health recently released the COVID-19 guidelines for healthcare practices in the community in a high and very high caseload environment for healthcare practices in the community to risk-assess COVID-19 exposure and ensure continuity of critical services, including in remote and rural WA.

What are the key areas for feedback?

These discussion notes will be used by RACGP to inform the continuous improvement of the guidelines.

RELIEF

that there were finally Guidelines.

GRATITUDE

that the Guidelines had been strongly advocated for by a range of primary health stakeholders.

HELPFUL

to have the distinction between aerosol generating procedures and behaviours, but felt the list of examples was very hospital-focused. This was particularly relevant because of the need to wear appropriate PPE that includes fit-tested N95/P2 masks where aerosol generating procedures or behaviours are involved.

INTEREST

that the Guidelines have not been updated since their implementation, including after we went into a very high caseload environment.