

# COVID-19 Primary Care Update No. 25

General Practice Liaison Network, Healthcare Improvement Unit

**Tuesday 31 March 2020**

Dear Colleagues

## Updates

- Queensland Health published Public Health Alert No 8 on 31 March 2020 (attached)
- Public Health Alert no 7 was published on 27 March 2020 (attached)
- The Queensland Clinical Senate and Networks published further advice on 31 March 2020 (attached)

## PPE

- Just a reminder that PHNs are able to distribute surgical and P2 masks to general practice and pharmacies. They are receiving further stocks but stock levels are still carefully managed.
- Please contact your own PHN for local arrangements and availability. For Brisbane North PHN, information about accessing masks is here: <https://www.brisbanenorthphn.org.au/page/news-and-events/latest-news/covid-19-information/access-to-surgical-masks-for-general-practice-and-pharmacies/>

## MBS Items – clarifications from the AMA

The information in this section must be confirmed with MBS Online, and is intended for information only – it is not for distribution to media or social media:

- RACF-specific telehealth MBS item numbers are being developed. For now, GPs can use the corresponding item numbers they would have in their practice
- The restriction on private billing for non-concessional patients is expected to be lifted in the near future. The delay is because of workload, rather than intent (i.e. 10 years of MBS work in 10 days)
- Telehealth items no longer require the patient to have attended before; however, chronic disease items should be provided (as before) by the 'usual GP'
- Contemporary records must be kept for telehealth consultations
- Video is preferred to phone (i.e. visual vs auditory)
- Video downloads of consultations may have confidentiality issues and are not (currently) suitable as a contemporary medical record
- Telehealth items are 85% of rebate, not 100%. However, the amount has been adjusted to be equivalent to the non-telehealth equivalent. This arrangement is a practical one to expedite the new numbers
- There are restrictions on billing a telehealth and face-to-face consultation in the same day

## Testing for COVID-19

An admittedly oversimplification is that testing can be done using antigens (preferred) or antibodies. A number of new testing methods are currently being reviewed for approval and may become available in the next few days in Queensland – details to follow. For now, it is worth noting that antibody tests are typically only positive approximately 7 days after infection (high risk of false negatives), but with the benefit of results within minutes.

## Community Recovery Hotline

- Help is available for people who have no other means of support during the COVID-19 pandemic. A Community Recovery Hotline has been activated by the Queensland Government (Department of Communities) to assist people who have been advised to quarantine at home by a medical professional, Queensland Health or through government direction, and have no other mechanisms for support.
  - Community Recovery Hotline staff will be able to work with partner organisations to arrange non-contact delivery of essential food and medication, and other assistance to people in quarantine with no other means of support.
- The Community Recovery Hotline can be contacted on 1800 173 349.

## Resources

QH published Safety and wellbeing FAQs on 26 March 2020 (attached). The target audience is QH employees, but there may be relevant information for primary care.

## Mental Health

It is important to care of our mental health at all times and especially during pandemics. The following support and services are available specifically for doctors (thanks GCPHN for sharing) and is not an endorsement or intended to be exclusive.

### ***RACGP The GP Support Program***

This is a free and confidential psychological support service available to all members.

<https://www.racgp.org.au/racgp-membership/member-offers/the-gp-support-program>

1300 361 008 (24 hours/7 days)

### ***Queensland Doctors Health Program and Doctors Health Advisory Service***

The QDHP provides independent, confidential, colleague-to-colleague support service to assist doctors and medical students

<https://dhasq.org.au/>

### ***AMA Anonymous Peer Support Line*** (Also available to non-members)

1300 853 338

### ***DRS4DRS***

DRS4DRS is an independent program providing confidential support and resources to doctors and medical students across Australia, by doctors. Confidential phone advice is available 24/7 for any doctor or medical student in Australia via each state/territory helpline and referral service.

07 3833 4352

<https://www.drs4drs.com.au/>

#### **About this Document:**

- This document was an e-mail sent to a wide range of primary care staff and clinicians. The content is related to COVID-19 and the Queensland response and is intended for the free use and wide dissemination by the recipients or anyone else who access this webpage
- Every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate and up-to-date. If you become aware of any issues, please notify us so we can amend our documents
- Please provide any feedback or contact us using our e-mail [COVID19-PC@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:COVID19-PC@health.qld.gov.au). Please note that the inbox is not continuously monitored, and we may not be able to respond to every message.

## Inspirational quote

I spoke to my sister this morning, who is an ICU nurse in Africa. They are issued one face mask a week. At the end of a shift, they place the mask into a paper envelope marked with a 'F' and 'B' (front and back). Her reflection on how things have changed: '*we shop for groceries like it is Christmas – all of the aggression but none of the fun*'. I hope you are finding many moments of happiness amidst the pandemic. Take care.

Carl

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