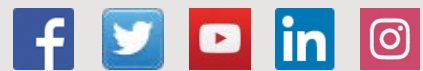


Network Link

August 2020



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It's safe to see your GP

It's safe to see your GP and maintain appointments with other healthcare professionals, so don't put your health on hold any longer.

That is the message 30-year veteran General Practitioner and Brisbane North PHN Board Chair Dr Anita Green wants patients to understand as Queensland continues to deal with COVID-19.

"Whether you need a flu jab or a regular health check, don't delay. Book in with your GP today," Dr Green said.

Her call coincides with the launch of a new Primary Health Network campaign, across radio and online media, in response to reports from healthcare providers that many people are avoiding vital medical care.

"We know the people who have been most at risk during the pandemic are those with chronic complex disease and the older members of our community," Dr Green said.

Continued on page 2

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BRISBANE NORTH

An Australian Government Initiative



Continued from page 1

“They largely heeded the health messages to stay at home, self-isolate and keep themselves safe when the Coronavirus first appeared and I congratulate them for doing so,” she said.

“But people shouldn’t put their healthcare on hold any longer.

“It is very important for anyone living with asthma and other lung conditions, cancers, diabetes or cardiovascular disease, to continue their regular medical care to avoid serious complications.

“We want them to reconnect with their GP, psychologist, podiatrist, physio or other healthcare professional and get the normal healthcare they need to have on a regular basis.



“For infection control reasons, so we can maintain a COVID safe environment for all patients, we just need them to phone ahead or book with their clinic online. It’s that simple,” Dr Green said.

To search for a local healthcare professional or service, visit: www.brisbanenorthphn.org.au/safetosegp.

With thanks to Darling Downs West Moreton PHN for initiating, developing and permitting Brisbane North PHN to adapt and share the campaign in our region.

COVID-19 update



With the COVID-19 situation rapidly changing, Brisbane North PHN is keeping a close eye on developments and encouraging all general practices to be prepared.

To receive our latest COVID-19 news updates visit brisbanenorthphn.org.au/covid-19 and click through to subscribe.

The PHN has been allocated a limited supply of surgical and P2/N95 masks to distribute to practices and pharmacies. If your practice or pharmacy requires surgical masks email covid19@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

For information on the location and opening hours of regional GP respiratory and Fever Clinics, as well as all the latest COVID-19 information visit brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

ABOUT NETWORK LINK

For submissions and advertising or to subscribe, visit brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

e info@brisbanenorthphn.org.au | w brisbanenorthphn.org.au | t 07 3630 7300

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The Winter Wellness Guide includes the following action plan templates for GPs to personalise and use with patients:

- ✓ asthma
- ✓ anaphylaxis
- ✓ chest pain
- ✓ chronic kidney disease
- ✓ chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- ✓ delirium
- ✓ heart failure
- ✓ type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Winter Wellness Guide helps manage chronic conditions

During the winter period, it is important that vulnerable patients are supported with regular and proactive care. The newly launched Winter Wellness Quality Improvement guide has been designed to support GPs to identify and support their most vulnerable patients during this winter.

Each winter the demand for healthcare increases due to the increased prevalence of seasonal conditions and infectious diseases as well as the exacerbation of existing conditions due to seasonal changes. Older patients and patients with existing chronic and complex conditions are especially vulnerable during this time. During the COVID-19 pandemic this is especially important.

The Winter Wellness guide provides a simple two-step approach to identifying and supporting these vulnerable

patients. To further support this work, Brisbane North has also provided a snapshot of annual hospitalisation data in the region. When personalised and regularly reviewed, these action plans are associated with an increase in patient self-efficacy, fewer unplanned hospitalisations and timely contact with a GP or health professional when they need it.

To start using the guide at your practice contact your Primary Care Liaison Officers on 07 3630 7300 or to download the guide visit bnphn.org/winterwellness.

COVID-19 Telehealth Survey Outcomes

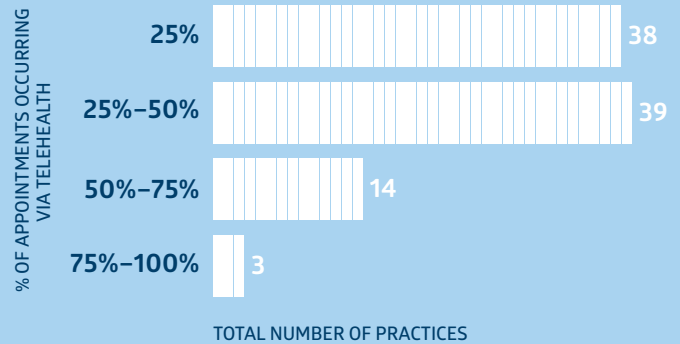
Brisbane North PHN recently undertook a region-wide snapshot to identify trends in the uptake and adoption of telehealth care by general practice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of the survey was to understand the impact of COVID-19 on workplaces and inform the direction of the PHN's support on telehealth implementation.

The PHN also want to identify what training is needed within general practices, plus areas of future support that might be required as we move into the recovery phase.

Ninety-four responses (27 per cent) were received from practices and the findings are summarised here.

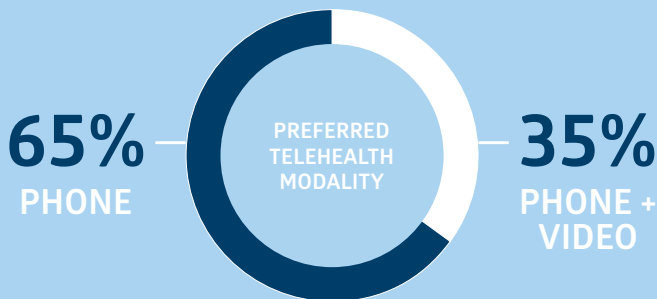
TELEHEALTH CARE UPTAKE BY GENERAL PRACTICES IN BRISBANE NORTH PHN



- 38 general practices identified that telehealth appointments were occurring up to 25 per cent of the time.
- 39 general practices identified that telehealth appointments were occurring 25–50 per cent of the time.
- 14 general practices identified that telehealth appointments were occurring 50–75 per cent of the time.
- 3 general practices identified that telehealth appointments were occurring 75–100 per cent of the time.

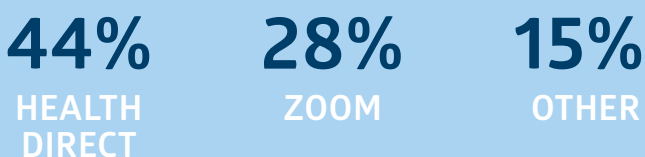
CURRENT TELEHEALTH MODALITY USE

The preferred telehealth modality currently in use across general practices: includes phone (65 per cent), followed by phone and video (35 per cent).



PREFERRED VIDEO PLATFORM

The preferred video platform in use by general practices includes health direct (44 per cent), followed by Zoom (28 per cent), other (15 per cent) based on client preference including Microsoft Teams, CoviU, FaceTime and Skype (12 per cent).



POST-PANDEMIC PREFERENCES

General practices identified the following preferences for how they would like to continue to use telehealth after the pandemic:



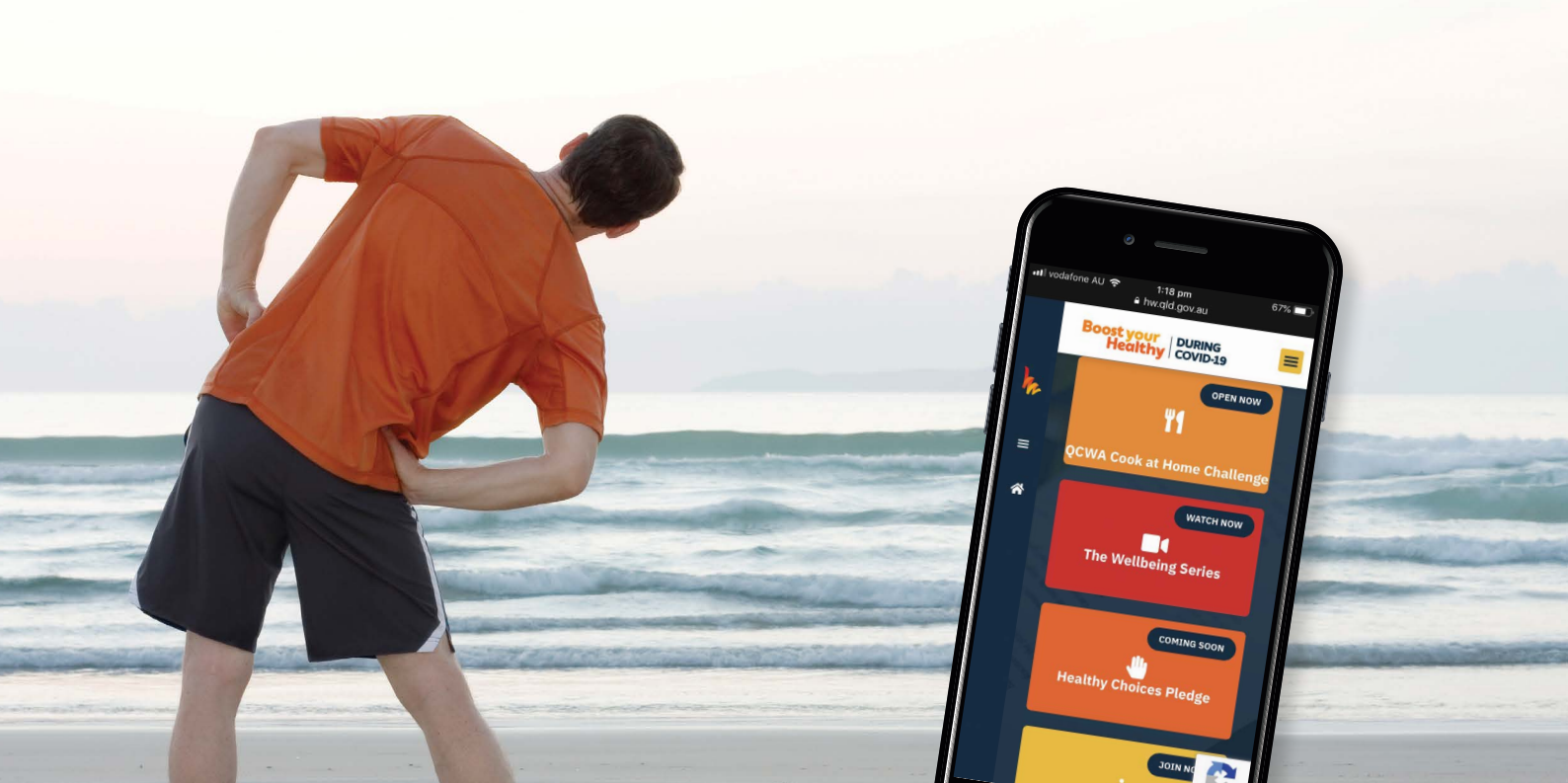
TELEHEALTH WAS IDENTIFIED AS BEING PREFERRED FOR:

1. follow up appointments
2. issuing prescriptions
3. with enrolled patients
4. short consultations.

TELEHEALTH WAS IDENTIFIED AS BEING LESS PREFERRED FOR:

1. management of chronic disease
2. long consultations
3. new appointments.

If you want to provide feedback on how your practice used telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic contact your Primary Care Liaison Officer on 07 3630 7300 or email info@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.



Web series supports Queenslanders to make time for wellbeing

A new eight-part web series empowering Queenslanders to renew their focus on wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic has been launched by the Queensland Government.

A *Boost your Healthy* initiative, the *My health for life* Wellbeing Series supports Queenslanders to make positive changes for their health through a series of themed-episodes exploring mindfulness, goal-setting, sleep, creativity and other key topics.

Iron man champion Trevor Hendy, Go-Betweens musician John Willsteed and Townsville Ninja Warrior Danial Wyles-Wall appear in the series presented by television personality Jillian Whiting, alongside health coaches, clinicians and Queenslanders from all from all walks of life. The first episodes are available now to stream from *Boost your Healthy*.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Steven Miles encouraged Queenslanders to make time for their wellbeing.

“The *My health for life* Wellbeing Series is a great, free resource created for Queenslanders,” Mr Miles said.

“While some things have not been within our control at this time, we are able to make moving more and making healthier food and drink choices a priority.

“The stories and examples featured in the *My health for life* Wellbeing Series demonstrate how even the little changes we make now can have big health benefits.”

Assistant Minister for Health Nikki Boyd said 2020 had been a challenging time but it had also been a year of rediscovery.

“Queenslanders are renewing their focus on health and wellbeing and rediscovering the importance of creating and

maintaining healthy habits for themselves and their families, even under difficult circumstances,” she said.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland Chief Executive Robyn Littlewood said the *My health for life* Wellbeing Series would take Queenslanders on a journey to uncover what influences our health.

“COVID-19 has disrupted the way we go about our day-to-day lives, from how we eat and move to how we work, learn, shop, relax and communicate. While this has been challenging, Queenslanders have not only adapted, we’ve found new and meaningful ways to stay safe and healthy,” she said.

“In uncertain times, looking after your wellbeing is one of the most important things you can do and the *My health for life* Wellbeing Series is all about this – empowering Queenslanders to make time for wellness by focusing on the personal behaviours that influence our overall health and wellbeing.

My health for life program director Lyn Hamill said she was humbled by the number of Queenslanders who gave generously of their time or expertise to help produce The Wellbeing Series.

“Whether it was people taking part in street interviews, academics, athletes, artists, health professionals or household names, it was important to these Queenslanders to be part of something positive that celebrates good health, family, community and kindness,” she said.

To view The Wellbeing Series visit
hw.qld.gov.au/bigboost/the-wellbeing-series.

Supporting senior Australians during the coronavirus pandemic



Senior Australians are at greater risk of more serious illness if they catch coronavirus. As we move towards a COVIDSafe Australia, it is important for people at greater risk to take extra steps to protect themselves.

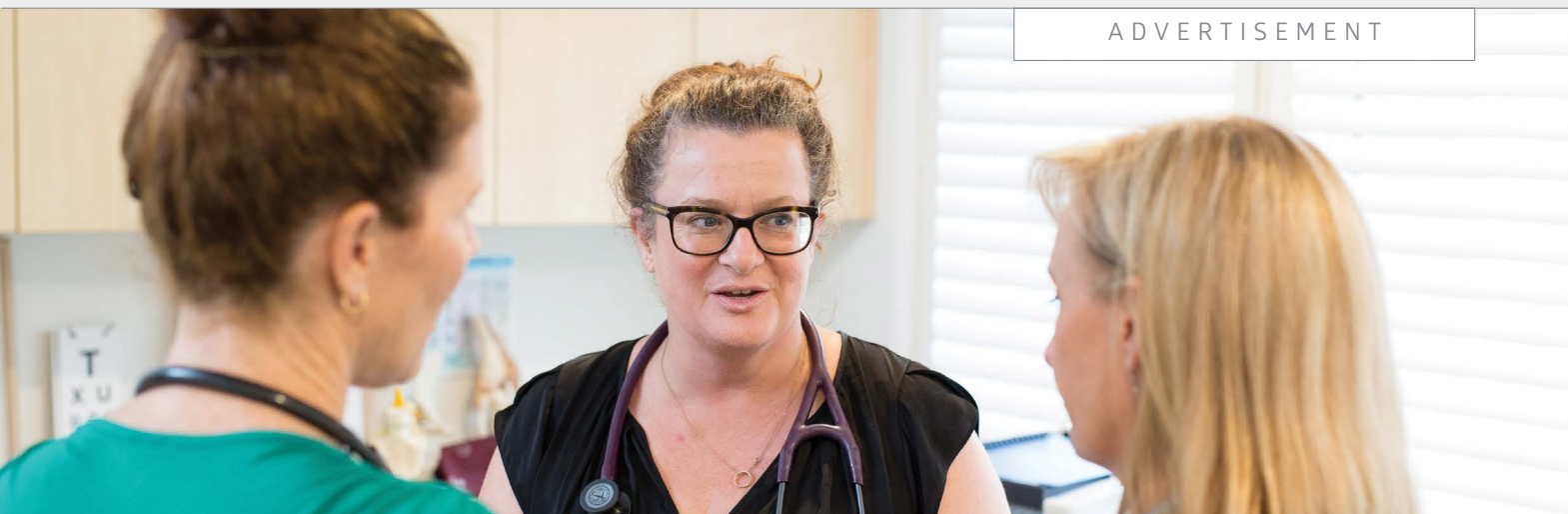
Older people should continue to maintain 1.5 metres distance from people they do not live with and practise good hygiene. These are the best defences against coronavirus.

If you or your patient would like further information about support services available or about COVID-19, please visit the Department of Health website.

There are support services available for older Australians if they would like to continue to stay at home to protect themselves.

- **Telehealth appointments** with their GP rather than face-to-face appointments.
- **Delivery of prescriptions** through their pharmacy.
- The new **Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line** provides information, support and connection Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 6.00 pm on 1800 171 866.
- People over the age of 65 can access **prepared meals** or **priority online and telephone grocery shopping**. They can contact **My Aged Care** on 1800 200 422 from Monday to Friday 8.00 am to 8.00 pm and Saturday 10.00 am to 2.00 pm.
- The **Community Visitors Scheme** is available for people feeling isolated and would benefit from friendship and companionship. Visit www.health.gov.au/cvs for more information.
- The **FriendLine** is for anyone who needs to reconnect or just wants a chat on 1800 424 287. All conversations with FriendLine are casual and anonymous and friendly volunteers are ready to talk about anything and everything.

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Is your practice covered for employment disputes?

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My Aged Care e-Referral for GPs

GPs can refer their patients to My Aged Care from their electronic practice management systems via the e-Referral form. This form is one of many pathways into My Aged Care, and is especially useful for patients who need to provide their medical information to the assessor. It is used by over 1,000 practices around Australia.

GPs can access the e-Referral form from Best Practice, MedicalDirector and Genie practice management systems.

The form is secure, easy to use and accessible through the patient’s electronic medical record. By pre-populating patient information, the focus is on screening the patient. This makes it the quickest and easiest way for GPs to refer patients to My Aged Care.

Alternatively, GPs and sector professionals can refer patients by:

- calling My Aged Care on 1800 200 422
- use the Make a referral web form.

Older Australians may also use the following options to refer themselves or on behalf of a family member or friend:

- call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422
- use the Apply for an assessment online form on the My Aged Care website – <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au>.

For more information email myagedcare.hpreferrals@health.gov.au



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Free training

Aged Care Mental Health Workforce Online Training

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health

The APS has developed a series of online training modules for the mental health workforce, with input from a range of professional and consumer groups with expertise in aged care.

The courses aim to up-skill health practitioners in the provision of mental health support services to older people living in residential aged care facilities.

This training is available for a number of health and community professionals including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, occupational therapists, mental health nurses, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers. The training is designed to complement the stepped care framework to service both low and high intensity workforces.

Visit www.mhcareinracf.com.au

News from Metro North Public Health Unit

The Metro North Public Health Unit focuses on protecting the community from communicable diseases and other illnesses, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. For further information on any of the updates below contact 07 3624 1111.



MANAGING GUEST HEALTH IN HOTEL QUARANTINE

Metro North is currently accommodating over 1,000 returned travellers in hotel quarantine and will continue to do so moving forward, as Queensland manages the COVID-19 pandemic.

GPs are making an important contribution to that care. While in hotel quarantine, returned travellers require easy access to COVID-19 related healthcare, non-COVID-19 healthcare, and mental health and wellbeing services. Metro North Public Health Unit has been responsible for liaison with a range of services for returned travellers in quarantine, provided by the hospital and health service, by general practices and by other agencies.

1. COVID-19 healthcare

All returned travellers are contacted throughout their quarantine to offer channels for obtaining help, to ask about their general health and wellbeing, and to screen for symptoms of COVID-19. Usually this will occur around day three, day eight and day 12 of their 14-day hotel quarantine period.

If returned travellers develop COVID-19 symptoms they are required to report these symptoms. They are clinically assessed, a COVID-19 test is facilitated if indicated, and their accommodation for illness care managed. If a return traveller has symptoms that are life threatening or urgent, the advice is

that they call 000, and are managed by the Hospital Fever Clinic. If symptoms are milder, they are directed to notify reception, and are managed by the Mobile Fever Clinic accessible on site.

Because of the higher risk of exposure, COVID-19 testing as a screening procedure has recently been introduced for this group. If a returned traveller does not develop any COVID-19 symptoms they are still required to have COVID-19 testing between day 9–12 of their hotel quarantine period, to facilitate their release.

2. Non COVID-19 healthcare

If returned travellers require routine healthcare, such as access to prescriptions, monitoring known health conditions and/or assessment of a new health condition (non COVID-19), they are encouraged to arrange a telehealth appointment with a GP. They are asked to let their doctor know they are in hotel quarantine, and that COVID testing is available on site.

While in hotel quarantine, returned travellers have avenues to obtain prescription and non-prescription medications. A GP can fax a script to

the closest chemist/pharmacy that will deliver to the relevant hotel. Access to pathology services is limited, and non-urgent pathology should be delayed where possible.

If the returned traveller's GP decides that an urgent medical review, pathology and/or treatment is required, the advice is to call Triple Zero and arrange transfer to Hospital. Please let 000 know that the returned traveller is in hotel quarantine.

3. Mental health and wellbeing

Returned travellers are being directed to various counselling and support phone lines including Red Cross, Lifeline and the Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service. If acute issues arise, returned travelers are directed to the Acute Care Mental Health service.

4. Useful resources

For specific queries regarding the provision of healthcare for a returned traveller in Metro North hotel quarantine call the Metro North Public Health Unit switchboard on 07 3624 1111 and ask to speak to the Quarantine Release Team Nurse.

For more information visit www.bnphn.org/QH-quarantine



A breast screen every two years is recommended for women aged 50 to 74.
Book your appointment today.



Authorised by the Queensland Government, William Street, Brisbane.

Make breast screening a priority for your patients' health

BreastScreen Queensland Brisbane Northside Service have now reopened and re-commenced breast screening following the temporary suspension of routine breast screening across the state in response to COVID-19. To minimise the risk from COVID-19, we have implemented a range of social distancing measures, hygiene practices and increased cleaning.

Encouragement by a primary healthcare professional is proven to increase participation in screening programs. GPs are encouraged to recommend breast screening every

two years with their patients aged 50–74 as this is the age group most at risk of developing breast cancer. Women aged 40 to 49, and 75 years and over are also eligible to have a breast screen every two years.

Breast screening is free, takes 30 minutes, and is performed by female health professionals. To increase screening participation at your practice, contact the Brisbane Northside BreastScreen Queensland Health Promotion Officers at BSQ.BrisbaneNorth.HPO@health.qld.gov.au.

Antibiotic Allergy Assessment Service open again

The Antibiotic Allergy Assessment Service, formally known as the Penicillin Allergy Clinic, is up and running again at The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. COVID-19 meant that referrals were being rejected, however we are accepting referrals for all patients with a documented penicillin and cephalosporin allergies.

To make your referral to our service please make sure you select **Infectious Diseases – Dr. Andrew Redmond** on the referral system that you use and clearly state that the patient is for penicillin or cephalosporin allergy assessment.

Results of the assessment will be sent to the referring GP as well as the patient. Enquires may also be made to Infectious Disease Reception on 07 3646 8761 or email antibioticallergy@health.qld.gov.au



News in brief

▶ Strengthening the regulations of e-cigarettes

To reduce the risk to public health through addiction to nicotine and nicotine poisoning, the Australian Government has asked the Governor-General in Council to make regulations from 1 July 2020 prohibiting the importation of e-cigarettes containing vapouriser nicotine (nicotine liquids and salts) and nicotine-containing refills unless on prescription from a doctor.

If the doctor believes that e-cigarettes may assist their patient to stop smoking the steps to supply are:

- prescribe e-cigarettes containing vapouriser nicotine
- apply online to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (the TGA) for an approval to supply the goods under special access scheme B or authorisation as an authorised prescriber; the TGA has a dedicated webpage including step-by-step instructions to making an application.

For more information visit www.health.gov.au.

▶ Coronavirus assets for healthcare providers

The Queensland Health collection of COVID-19 resources for hospital and health services and private healthcare facilities has been updated. The asset library includes icons, stock images and posters to use within the waiting room.

To view the full asset library visit assetlibrary.health.qld.gov.au or for more information email SCB-Coronavirus@health.qld.gov.au.

▶ Minor change to the HPOS navigation pathway

The Health Practitioner Online Services (HPOS) navigation pathway was recently updated and now combines the two existing tiles for 'Healthcare Identifiers' and 'My Health Record Services' via a new tile in 'My Programs' called 'Healthcare Identifiers and My Health Record'.

The updated navigation pathway is:

1. Log into **PRODA**
2. Healthcare Professional Online Service (HPOS)
3. Select **'My Programs'**
4. Select **'Healthcare Identifiers and My Health Record'**
5. Select relevant Healthcare Identifiers or My Health Record services.

▶ Immunisation catch-up calculator now available

The National Immunisation Catch-up Calculator (NICC) is now available and is based on the Australian National Immunisation Program (NIP) recommendations for Australian immunisation schedules.

This version of the National Immunisation Catch-up Calculator (NICC) has been developed and designed for Australian children less than 10 years of age based on the National Immunisation Program scheduled vaccines. Schedule variations for all states and territories have been incorporated.

The calculator can be accessed at <https://bnphn.org/NICCalculator>.

▶ New disability advisory telephone service

COVID-19 Health Professionals Disability Advisory Service, a telephone advisory service established by the Commonwealth Department of Health, is now available. The service will provide specialised advice exclusively for health professionals responsible for the medical care of people with disability diagnosed with COVID-19 or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Healthdirect Australia has been engaged to manage the service and calls will be answered by health professionals with disability service qualifications and experience working with people with disability. Health professionals can call the service on 1800 131 330.

Noticeboard

Please contact the relevant organisation for more information about the items below.

The value of general practice nurses

A new guide for general practices explains how to make the most of the nurse role during COVID-19. It also shows how nurses attract revenue streams that will sustain practices today and into the future.

It has been endorsed the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, the Australian Association of Practice Management and the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association. To access the guide visit <https://bnphn.org/value-of-nurses>.

Get savvy with digital health

The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association are inviting nurses interested in general health to join the new online Digital Health Community of Practice.

The community of practice will enable nurses to network with other primary health care nurses and learn tips about using digital health in your practice. Support will be provided by a nurse moderator who can answer questions. Register your interest now by emailing alice.houghton@apna.asn.au.

Practice nurse Facebook group

A Facebook page has been created for Brisbane nurses and practices to be able to connect during an acute nurse shortage event, which could be caused by COVID-19, holiday leave or illness.

The page provides a place for practices to list their needs and nurses to list their availability so both practices and nurses can find a match and help each other at short notice.

Join the group by searching '@BrisbaneGeneralPracticeNurseConnect' on Facebook.

Hepatitis Queensland resources and support

Hepatitis Queensland has developed a new three-part online video series focused on key steps to treating hepatitis C in community practice. These short videos are packed full of tips and tools to support GPs in continuing the hepatitis C elimination effort in their practice.

Access the resources at www.hepqld.asn.au.

New Asthma Council resources

The latest version of the National Asthma Council Australia's Allergic Rhinitis treatment chart is now available online. With allergic rhinitis affecting about three in four asthma patients, effective management is a crucial step in achieving good asthma control.

This visual tool helps you explain the options to your patients. Visit nationalasthma.org.au.

Chronic kidney disease app update

The popular CKD Go! app has been updated with the new information from the 4th edition Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Management in Primary Care handbook.

The CKD Go! app can now be downloaded free from the iTunes Store and from Google Play.

For further support managing CKD in your practice, visit www.kidney.org.au for useful resources and patient fact sheets. Refer patients to the free Kidney Helpline 1800 454 363 or kidney.helpline@kidney.org.au for additional support.

Spinal muscular atrophy and carrier screening

The RACGP have launched an education campaign aiming to raise awareness of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and other paediatric neuromuscular disorders. It also aims to give practitioners the knowledge and skills to initiate conversations about carrier screening.

The RACGP have put together a website full of information and resources to help GPs and other healthcare professionals understand the red flags for SMA and learn more about carrier screening for hereditary rare diseases.

For more information visit bewaretherare.com.au.

GP bulletin – August 2020

News from General Practice Liaison Officers at Brisbane North PHN and Metro North Hospital and Health Service.

Please provide feedback to the GPLO program mngplo@health.qld.gov.au.

HealthPathways update

Newly released HealthPathways:

- neuropathic pain
- breast symptoms and breast cancer
- colorectal symptoms
- inflammatory bowel disease

Login at: brisbanenorth.communityhealthpathways.org or phone 07 3630 7300 for login details.

To submit feedback about HealthPathways, please contact administration.integration@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

HealthPathways now integrated with GP Smart Referrals

You can now open the relevant GP Smart Referral template directly from the specialty request page in HealthPathways.

To find out more about GP Smart Referrals speak to your practice liaison officer or visit brisbanenorthphn.org.au/practice-support/digital-health.

COVID-19 updates

Find useful up-to-date local information on testing criteria, FAQs on COVID-19, how to preserve PPE, current services available and more on the COVID-19 HealthPathways.

To receive regular COVID-19 email updates visit bnphn.org/BNPHN-subscribe and share this link with colleagues who may not be subscribed.

Metro North's Virtual Emergency Department

Support your patient on their healthcare journey by consulting with an emergency consultant through your own clinic, using Metro North's Virtual Emergency Department.

Brisbane North GPs can now ring and speak directly to an emergency department consultant for advice and support to engage in alternative care pathways for patients with non-critical conditions to save the patient from a face-to-face ED presentation.

Call 1300 VIRTED (1300 847 838) to connect to a clinician or email MNHHSvirtualedadmin@health.qld.gov.au for more information.

Screening and diagnosis of gestational diabetes

The Queensland Clinical Guidelines Screening and diagnosis of Gestational Diabetes (GDM) during the COVID-19 pandemic guideline has been updated, recommending green, amber or red protocols based on risk of developing GDM and risk of COVID-19 contagion.

RBWH is adopting the "amber" protocol (may be subject to change). More information can be found at bnphn.org/GDMduringCOVID19.

Reproductive health training

TRUE relationships and reproductive health have released the ASK (Antenatal Syphilis Kit) training program, free training in sexual health assessment in pregnancy.

Webinars for South Queensland will run from 7-19 August 2020 found at: www.true.org.au/education/course-catalogue.

Preterm birth podcast with Dr Lehner

Dr Christoph Lehner, Obstetrician at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, is the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance Queensland Co-Lead.

Hear Dr Lehner speak about Preterm birth prevention in Queensland in a 30 minute podcast or read their newsletter for clinicians and consumers *The Whole Nine Months* at www.pretermalliance.com.au. Further resources are available at www.everyweekcounts.com.au.

How to use the Health Provider Portal

The Health Provider Portal allows Queensland GPs online access to many patient records at Queensland public hospitals including recent outpatient letters, emergency visit reports and mental health reports. The HPP team have created videos to show the range of patient information available on the HPP and how to register.

To watch the videos visit vimeo.com/425752454/a640d56920.

Patient pathology results on My Health Record

To assist with sharing private pathology results on My Health Record to assist specialists, Sullivan Nicolaidis Pathology (SNP) are able to send pathology reports to My Health Record using an "eOrder" from your practice software.

The patient will need to consent to send results to My Health Record and they will be available on My Health Record seven days after the result, allowing time to see the patient before it appears on My Health Record.

Contact SNP on 1800 100 769 for more information.