

## Strengthening Medicare – General Practice Grants Program

### Examples of investment activities under each investment stream

This document expands on table 2 of the Quick Reference Guide for General Practices.

#### Enhancing digital health capability

##### Objective:

To fast track the benefits of a more connected healthcare system in readiness to meet future standards.

##### Intended outcome:

Increase take-up of contemporary digital health solutions including video telehealth, secure data storage and interoperable software that supports seamless, secure communication of patient data.

You may wish to consult the following:

- RACGPs Standards for General Practices 5th edition on secure data storage, privacy and security requirements via [www.racgp.org.au](http://www.racgp.org.au) or [click here to view](#).
- RACGP guide to providing telephone and video consultations in general practice via [www.racgp.org.au](http://www.racgp.org.au) or [click here to view](#).
- up-to-date MBS guidance on telehealth MBS items [www.mbsonline.gov.au](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au)
- refer to the Australian Digital Health Agency on cyber security information via [www.digitalhealth.gov.au](http://www.digitalhealth.gov.au) or [click here to view](#).

#### General Practice IT systems

##### Hardware examples:

- Purchase of new or upgrade to IT equipment to support the practice (computers, digital portable devices, QR code scanner, servers, phone system, monitors with inbuilt cameras and speakers etc) including video conferencing equipment to support video telehealth services for practices with high volumes of videoconferencing.

##### Software examples:

- Purchase of video conferencing software to support video telehealth services
- Subscription to and/or transition to cloud-based practice management platforms or transition to the latest version of a different practice management product. This includes



	<p>subscriptions to/or purchasing online booking systems, secure messaging services, safe and effective transfer of information (e.g., specialist letters) and data backup services where the practice does not currently have these products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase of secure messaging software as a preferred method over email for managing patient health and consultation information</li> <li>• Purchase of medication management software</li> <li>• Purchase of up-to-date cybersecurity software to keep information secure</li> <li>• Purchase of electronic access to therapeutic guidelines</li> <li>• Purchase of electronic devices to assist with transition from paper records to medical software (e.g., voice recognition system in lieu of keyboard entry)</li> <li>• General practice's website development/upgrade.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Internet connectivity improvements</b></p>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase of, or upgrade to, hardware or infrastructure to enable better internet service reliability and high-speed connectivity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Upskilling staff in digital capability</b></p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenditure related to change in management processes for the adoption of new digital services such as e-Prescribing and video telehealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This could include reimbursement for staff time incurred for additional hours of training, or developing policies, processes, or training materials for practice staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Digital skills and literacy training courses delivered by a recognised Australian training service provider</li> <li>• Reimbursement of staff training time and/or consultant trainer costs in upskilling staff in their use of medical software.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional assessment of existing digital / cyber security capability and arrangements</b></p>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paying for a professional (e.g., IT manager/membership) to assess existing digital / cyber security capability and arrangements, to identify and/or manage implementation of improvements.</li> </ul>

## Upgrading infection prevention and control arrangements

### Objective:

To support the safe, face to face assessment of patients with symptoms of potentially infectious respiratory diseases (e.g. COVID, influenza).

**Intended outcome:**

Increase the proportion of COVID Positive and other respiratory patients treated in a general practice setting (by increasing practices' capacity to treat more of these patients).

You may wish to consult the [RACGP Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines](#) to identify and address areas for improvements.

<b>Professional assessment of existing infection prevention and control arrangements</b>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paying for a professional to assess existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, to identify repair/maintenance/upgrade needs).</li></ul>
<b>Infection prevention and control infrastructure</b>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improving on infrastructure to more safely manage patients with potentially transmissible infections (e.g. better separating and equipping of areas designated for potentially infectious patients)</li><li>• Upgrading infrastructure to minimise infection risk between all patients (e.g. replacement of older surfaces and fixtures with more easily cleanable ones)</li><li>• Creation of an area to don and doff PPE</li><li>• Purchasing hands-free taps / elbow taps / automatic opening doors</li><li>• Re-painting using washable paint and upgrade of practice, e.g. carpet to vinyl, cloth chairs to vinyl for ease of cleaning.</li></ul>
<b>Infection prevention and control equipment</b>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buying new, updated or replacement high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filters, air purifiers, sterilising equipment, upgrade/install air conditioning systems that minimise infection risk</li><li>• Purchasing ultrasonic cleaner, water disinfectant, autoclave</li><li>• Separate cleaning area for reusable medical devices - partitions/segregation, such as sluice room or separate to treatment room to minimise the risk of cross infection</li><li>• Purchasing biohazard and/or hands-free infectious waste bins, and collection services</li><li>• Purchasing reusable PPE, paper roll dispenser, wipeable pillows</li><li>• Purchasing reusable flat mop heads or purchasing and changing mop heads, vacuum cleaner</li><li>• Purchasing gazebos, heaters, laptops, chairs, injecting booths, portable couch – in the event of another large pandemic wave and segregation of potential infected people</li><li>• Purchasing Point of care test - Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) device capable of returning a result in 20 minutes for Covid/Flu/RSV for the purposes of testing staff or potentially patients.</li></ul>



	<p>Using the grant to create a stockpile of items (<u>not for subsidising business-as-usual costs of day-to-day consumables</u>) in preparation for future pandemic, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disposable PPE</li><li>• Paper rolls</li><li>• Single use medical instruments</li><li>• Disposable privacy screens.</li></ul>
<b>Improving infection prevention and control procedures including upskilling of staff</b>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reimbursement of staff time reviewing and updating practice protocols in relation to, for example, triage and patient flow in the context of likely further COVID-19 waves</li><li>• Paying for initial or refresher staff training on any aspect of infection prevention and control including completion of recognised training courses and/or reimbursement of in-practice training time.</li></ul>

## Maintaining or achieving accreditation against the RACGP Standards for General Practices

### Objective:

To promote quality and safety in general practice.

### Intended outcome:

Increase the number of accredited general practices.

*You may invest in any activities that increase accessibility, quality, and safety in general practice, and therefore support your practice to become accredited within the next 12 months, or maintain accreditation, against [RACGP Standards for General Practices](#).*

*For practices seeking to maintain accreditation, you may wish to identify priority investments based on areas identified in your last accreditation report.*

<b>Accessibility improvements for patients</b>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improving access for those who may have difficulties (e.g., those with communication difficulties, those with disabilities including intellectual disability):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– improvements to infrastructure e.g., to improve wheelchair access</li><li>– gathering information to identify priority groups (e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), to support better health outcomes and access to services</li><li>– adjustable bed, wheelchair.</li></ul></li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improvements for detection and management of development delay and disability, e.g.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– establishing prompts to ask about child development at immunisation appointments</li><li>– development of a system to flag patients with intellectual disability for administrative and clinical staff</li><li>– offer health assessments/chronic disease management plans for flagged patients</li><li>– redesign of clinic flows/waiting rooms, e.g., establishing low sensory waiting area.</li></ul></li></ul>
<p>Quality and safety improvements for patients</p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improving infrastructure to ensure privacy and confidentiality of consultation spaces<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Permanent screens in the waiting room for better privacy, other minor capital improvements (note: ensure any modifications undertaken comply with any existing lease for premises)</li><li>– Purchasing waiting room chairs</li></ul></li><li>• Reimbursement of staff time to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Review and update patient medical records including health summaries</li><li>– Conduct quality assurance activities to improve quality and safety within the practice. Activities may include practice meetings, audits of selected patient records, developing/documenting and improving systems, training in extracting and using data from clinical information systems and may target specific accreditation areas, e.g.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ensuring matters raised in previous consultations are followed up and recall of patients with 'clinically significant' results</li><li>▪ improving reminder systems</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Accreditation process related costs, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Cost of application and accreditation fees for a practice to maintain or achieve accreditation against the RACGP Standards for General Practices.</li><li>– Consultant services to undertake the practice improvements required to meet RACGP accreditation requirements</li><li>– Costs (e.g., licensing) of an online self-audit and improvement tool for practices to review themselves against the RACGP Standards for General Practices.</li></ul></li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Reimbursement of staff time (protected time) to complete work involved in readiness for Accreditation visit.</li><li>• Purchasing mandatory equipment in line with latest RACGP Standards for General Practices, e.g., Automated External Defibrillator/Defibrillator Pads and the Electrocardiogram, electronic blood pressure machine, X-ray viewing equipment, Theatre lights, equipment for a doctor's bag</li><li>• Establishing or improving medicines storage and/or management systems, purchasing a vaccine fridge and/or electronic data logger to assist with recording of fridge temperatures</li><li>• Purchasing solar panels and batteries for the practice e.g., to be used to power a vaccine fridge for continued cold storage during a prolonged power outage</li><li>• Costs of new subscription to RACGP Emergency Response Planning Tool</li><li>• Servicing electronic clinical equipment and calibration of surgical equipment e.g., autoclave, Blood Pressure equipment and scales</li><li>• Costs of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Defibrillator training, including staff time to attend these.</li><li>• Costs (e.g., subscription fee/other costs) of an online patient feedback system that collects and provides real-time patient feedback data to the practice.</li><li>• TV and/or screens, stereo systems/speakers for the purpose of enhancing patient privacy in the waiting room and/or used to broadcast health-related programs/messages.</li></ul>
<b>Supporting health and safety of staff</b>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buying new, updating or replacement high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filters, sterilising equipment, upgrade/install air conditioning systems that minimise infection risk</li><li>• Purchasing and/or installing duress alarms at reception and in consulting rooms</li><li>• Purchasing of office chairs (provided they serve the purpose of being a one-time purchase and are ergonomically designed to provide adequate support for practice staff).</li></ul>



## Upskilling staff

### *Examples:*

- Conducting activities that support the health and safety of practice staff
- Provision of designated professional support services and reimbursement of staff time to attend these
- Costs of conference course/training sessions (note: associated incidental expenses such as flights, accommodation and food allowance would not be eligible for coverage under the grant).

For further information, refer to the links below:

- [How the accessibility of your general practice affects those who may have difficulties](#)
- [Defibrillators and buying one for your practice](#)

If you have any questions about the General Practice Grants Program, please contact NQPHN at [grants@nqphn.com.au](mailto:grants@nqphn.com.au)