

Tips for administration team to support increased demand due to COVID-19

Thank you to Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN for the development of this resource.

Managing increased phone calls

- Consider a phone line dedicated to managing COVID-19 positive patients. You could:
 - purchase a temporary mobile phone with a dedicated number
 - add an additional option for your on-hold message
 - add waiting times in 'on hold' message.
- Consider phone headsets for staff to support improved efficiencies and infection control.
- Consider additional non-clinical screening questions your practice team will ask COVID-19 positive patients. Suggestions include:
 - patient name, next of kin details, date of birth/age, phone number, vaccination status, any household pregnancies or infants
- Advise patients that appointments will be via telehealth and communicate potential delays.
- Consider utilising [Health Direct](#) resources to compliment your practice webpage.
- Consider focusing on [self-calming techniques](#) when you encounter challenging behaviour.
- Ensure latest COVID-19 Triage Guide is available to all reception staff.

Resource » [Keeping Your Cool: Dealing With a Difficult Client or Patient | MyAdvice Webinar](#)

Example of 'on hold' message

"Thank you for calling medical centre, our staff are managing a high number of queries. If this is an emergency, please hang up and dial 000. If you have tested positive to COVID-19 and feel well, please see Health Direct website for self-care resources. If you have tested positive and feel unwell, please press 1 or call our dedicated phone number on 04xx xx xxx. Appointments can be made online via our webpage. For all other enquiries, please stay on the line."

Managing your appointment book

- Consider how you will structure your appointment book and communicate changes with the team. You could:
 - implement different icons or colours for different appointments based on [risk](#)



NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.



- contact billing and appointment software for tips on how to streamline appointment book and processes.
- Consider capacity and rostering schedules. You could:
 - roster a rotating COVID doctor and nurse/admin support for AM/PM shifts
 - review and allocate appropriate tasks to staff working from home
 - monitor unmet demands to address capacity issues.
- Establish who will manage the patient if the treating GP is not available:
 - consider the availability of other GPs/nurses in the practice
 - provide contact details for after-hours services.

Consider recording quality improvements for Accreditation and PIPQI.

Resources » [RACGP ten tips for becoming a time lord](#)

» [Australian Family Physician – Appointments 101](#)

Relevant COVID-19 updates can be found on our [website](#). Please ensure all staff have subscribed to the relevant COVID-19 updates.

Key contacts for practices

Northern Queensland Primary
Health Network:
support@nqphn.com.au

HealthPathways

Local HHS COVID-19 escalation pathways can be found on HealthPathways. [Click here](#) for details of how to access HealthPathways for your region.

Resources for patients

- [My COVID-19 Symptoms Diary](#)
- [RACGP Managing mild COVID-19 at home with assistance from your GP](#)
- [COVID-19 information for multicultural communities](#)
- [Health Direct Symptom Checker](#)

Key contacts

- 134 COVID (134 268)
- 13 HEALTH (134 32584)
- National Coronavirus Hotline: 1800 020 080

Professional support services

- Doctor's Health Advisory Service: (07) 3833 4352
- RACGP members GP Support Program: 1300 361 008
- Bush Support Services: 1800 805 391
- ACCRM Clinician Support: 1800 818 728