

COVID-19 Positive Case Home Visit Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Living with COVID – Positive Case Home Visit Program?

The program is focused on reducing hospitalisations and allowing people to actively engage in their own health management plan supported by a health care professional via an in-home visit arrangement.

Northern Queensland PHN (NQPHN) will provide funding to General Practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) to provide home visits as clinically required to those people isolating because of being affected by COVID-19. This includes home visits to Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF) residents.

What is the scope of the home visit – who can be supported by this program?

This program is to assist those people affected by COVID-19 who are being managed in their home or in a RACF by their GP, where a home visit will support the patient's management in relation to COVID-19, or can relate to other health conditions which cannot reasonably be delayed while the patient is isolating (e.g. injury, wound dressing). If a GP feels the patient needs escalation, please follow the COVID-19 positive pathways.

Who should conduct the in-home visit?

Accredited General practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations that have a current structure, protocol and clinical governance to facilitate home visits.

Are General Practitioners able to conduct the home visit?

Yes, General Practitioners can conduct the home visit. General Practitioners are not able to submit a MBS claim for the home visit if the visit is funded under this program.

Are Practice Nurses or Indigenous Health Workers able to conduct the home visits?

Yes. Practices can engage their employed practice nurses, nurse practitioners or Indigenous Health Workers to provide home visits in this model.

Patients' eligibility for a home visit must be assessed by the General Practitioner prior to a practice nurse, nurse practitioner, or Indigenous Health Worker undertaking the home visit.

Staff providing direct care to consumers must hold the appropriate registration with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Staff must also hold appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance or be covered by their employer's insurance.

All home visits must be conducted under the general practices or ACCHOs' Clinical Governance and workforce safety structure.



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.





Can the home visit be for COVID-19 symptoms?

Yes, the home visit can include assessment and management, where clinically indicated, of COVID-19 symptoms. General Practitioners are not able to submit a MBS claim for the home visit if the visit is funded under this program.

Can the home visit be for non-COVID clinical purposes?

Yes, the home visit can be for a clinical reason unrelated to the person's COVID-positive status. For example, wound dressing. The funding is to help support and manage Covid-19 positive patients within the community. This includes other medical conditions that require attention during isolation. The overseeing General Practitioner should assess the appropriateness of a home visit for each individual case.

Are home visits for routine monitoring of COVID-positive patients?

No, home visits are not intended to be for routine monitoring, which can be delivered by telehealth in most instances, but to provide a visiting service, by exception, where this will help avoid unnecessary escalation of patients to hospital.

What are some examples of reasons for home visits?

Examples of reasons for home visits include patients with caring responsibilities, antenatal care, wound care, and in-reach to RACFs. The overseeing General Practitioner must assess the appropriateness of a home visit for each individual case.

Does the home visit need to be limited to a COVID-positive patient?

No, however the patient and their residence must be affected by COVID-19. For example, the home visit can be to provide clinical care to:

- a COVID-positive patient
- a patient residing with and caring for a COVID-positive person
- a patient who is a dependent residing with a COVID-positive person
- a person with a disability or a housebound person unable to attend a practice because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Can the home visit be used for face-to-face visits to people who are not affected by COVID-19?

No, people who are not affected by COVID-19 who require face-to-face care can access usual primary care or usual after-hours services. The service is only available for the purpose of supporting COVID-affected people to avoid unnecessary escalation to hospital.

How recent does the COVID-positive diagnosis need to be?

The visit must be within 30 days of the COVID-positive diagnosis.

Can patients living in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) receive a home visit?

Yes, patients living in RACFs can receive a home visit.

Can the home visit be for social support, not a medical reason?

No, the funding is to provide a service to avoid unnecessary escalation of patients to hospital.

Can the home visit funding be used for telehealth instead of face-to-face visits?

No, the purpose of the home visit funding is to support face-to-face clinical care. There are currently 23 telehealth MBS items available to medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, midwives, practice nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers. More information on telehealth items is available at: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/mbs-and-telehealth

Can the home visit funding be repurposed for face-to-face care of COVID-positive patients within a general practice?

No, COVID-positive patients recovering at home must adhere to isolation protocols.

Can the home visit be after hours?

Yes, the home visit can be in the after-hours period. It is the responsibility of the General Practitioner to assess the patient's eligibility for an after-hours home visit prior to the visit occurring.

Can I claim for additional travel?

No, the fee for service includes travel.

Can I claim the cost of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for each home visit?

No, practices which provide care to COVID-positive patients are eligible to access PPE from the National Medical Stockpile via NQPHN. Orders for PPE can be placed via the [NQPHN PPE Request Form](#).

Can a provider receiving a MBS payment for a home visit also receive home visit funding?

No, NQPHN funding for home visits must not pay for or subsidise services already funded through Medicare.

Home visit payment

How much do I receive for each home visit?

General Practices and ACCHOs will be paid a \$250.00 (exc. GST) fee for each visit, however the practice is **unable to claim a MBS Medicare rebate on top of this**.

This fee includes an amount for reporting requirements to be met.

How do I seek payment?

Payment will be provided on submission of a fortnightly invoice, including a report on a template provided by NQPHN. This template for reporting and invoicing will be supplied to participating practices. This report and invoice should be emailed to preparednessandresponse@nqphn.com.au on the 15th and 30th day of each month.

Reporting requirements

What are the reporting requirements for the program?

General Practices and ACCHOs will need to provide clear reporting of service contacts as per the NQPHN fortnightly activity reporting template. This report will include but not limited to:

- Date visit occurred
- Time taken
- Primary purpose of visit.

Pathways and monitoring guidelines

COVID-19 Positive Pathway

The COVID-19 Positive Pathway provides direction on escalation and de-escalation of care based on consumers condition/s. To access these pathways please go to our HealthPathways website:

- [HealthPathways Far North Queensland](#)
- [HealthPathways Townsville](#)
- [HealthPathways Mackay](#)

What guidelines can I use to monitor patients?

The RACGP website provides guidance as per the following link: www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/other-health-issues/covid-19-home-care-guidelines

Information in this document should be used to support any local or more contemporary advice, such as the [National COVID-19 Evidence Taskforce guidelines](#) and HealthPathways.

Where to go for more information

Please contact the NQPHN Preparedness and Response team at preparednessandresponse@nqphn.com.au