



COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID-19 Information from the SA Health GP Liaison

20 April 2020

Don't forget to email or call with any feedback or concerns. Email at Health.COVID-19GPLiaison@sa.gov.au

Farewell to Danny

Very sad news that Danny Byrne will be leaving the SA Health COVID-19 GP Liaison Team, with his last day today. This is due to an unwell family member interstate who is receiving palliative care. We are so thankful to Danny and all that he has achieved over the past five weeks. Emily will remain at SA Health, promoting the importance of primary care, answering your questions and continuing to write these long updates!

New MBS Numbers for Telehealth

As of today, two new bulk-billing incentive items have been introduced for services provided to patients who are more vulnerable to COVID-19. These are MBS #s 10981 (metropolitan) and 10982 (regional). They cannot be co-claimed with other bulk-billing incentive items. See fact sheet [here](#).

Who is a vulnerable patient under the new bulk-billing incentives?

Vulnerable means a patient at risk of COVID-19, so a person who:

- Is required to self-isolate or self-quarantine in accordance with guidance issued by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in relation to COVID-19; or
- Is at least 70 years old; or
- If the person identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent—is at least 50 years old; or
- Is pregnant; or
- Is the parent of a child aged under 12 months; or
- Is being treated for a chronic health condition; or
- Is immune compromised; or
- Meets the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection.

A chronic health condition is medical condition that has been present (or is likely to be present) for at least six months or is terminal. The Department of Health website provides additional detail online [here](#).

Social Isolation Support Service at SALHN

GPs from Southern Adelaide are now able to refer their patients who are overwhelmed or struggling to access services in the current changing conditions. This is a SALHN service staffed

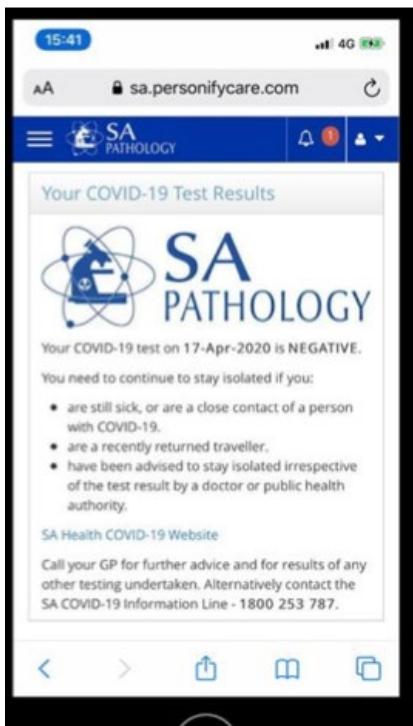
by social workers and health navigator nurses. Referral via Fax (08) 7177 0728 or Phone 0435 351 481. [See info sheet attached](#).

CDNA Update

The CDNA published an [updated SoNG, version 2.6](#), which details a few important changes. Firstly, as a precautionary approach, cases are considered to be infectious 48-hours prior to onset of symptoms. Secondly, a close contact is defined as requiring face-to-face contact in any setting with a confirmed or probable case, for greater than 15 minutes cumulative over the course of a week, in the period extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case.

SA Pathology - Negative test results via SMS

We have been discussing this now for a few weeks - SA Pathology has launched a [new COVID-19 Digital Health Service](#) to streamline the delivery of negative COVID-19 test results, enabling patients to access them from a secure online platform. A text message is sent to alert them to when a **negative test** result has become available online. The process of undergoing testing for COVID-19 and waiting for the results can be stressful so it is hoped the portal will reduce delays and give early peace of mind for people. All test results will be manually reviewed before entering them into the portal to ensure accuracy and all patients who return a positive COVID-19 test result will still be contacted personally to inform them. It will initially be available at all metropolitan testing clinical and eight regional clinics with plans to expand the roll out across the state in the coming weeks. The results will still be uploaded into MyHR and also downloaded into your inbox if your name is on the request form.



Isolation vs Quarantine

We have had many questions around what the difference is between quarantine and isolation. Here are the CDCB definitions:

Isolation / Self-isolation: When a person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is suspected of having it (and doesn't need to be in hospital), including while awaiting test results, they must stay in **self-isolation**.

Quarantine / Self-quarantine: When a person is not sick but is required to stay away from others due to a risk of exposure to COVID-19, such as interstate or overseas travel, they must stay in **self-quarantine**.

For example, Danny is required to do two weeks of quarantine when he returns from interstate!

Pharmacology Update

Joy Gailer, from DATIS, has written a useful summary around Hydroxychloroquine, QTc prolongation and COVID-19: medication safety considerations. [See attached](#).

Rheumatology Update

Osteoporosis Australia have updated their [position statement](#) this month and have also released an update on COVID-19 and osteoporosis. Thank you to Dr Jane Elliott, who sits of the OA Medical and Scientific Committee, for sending us [the attached media release](#), it covers the importance of not delaying Prolia injections by more than 4 weeks and if not possible to administer, discusses alternative options.

Professor Catherine Hill, Rheumatologist, has sent through some excellent information from the Australian Rheumatology Association on rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory and autoimmune conditions in relation to COVID-19. See the [GP Fact Sheet](#) and [Patient Fact Sheet](#).

RACF visitor closures and family impact

The official response to RACF closures is that operators of residential aged care facilities must take all reasonable steps to ensure compliance with the Direction, however, unfortunately there is nothing to prohibit a private provider from implementing even stricter restrictions in line with their own infection control protocols, should they choose to do so. Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) can assist people receiving aged care services or their representatives, on 1800 700 600. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has a dedicated complaints process and relevant information can found here: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint>.

Lab accreditation of COVID-19 tests

No COVID-19 testing platform has yet received formal NATA accreditation. There is a requirement for a statement to be included with all COVID-19 results, that emphasises these results have not yet been validated. This does not discount the reliability of the result. Both SA Pathology and Clinical Labs are providing tests here in SA. In keeping with the recommended process for all laboratories participating in COVID-19 testing, the Clinical Labs COVID-19 assay has received verification from state based COVID-19 testing and will receive retrospective NATA approval.

Respiratory Clinics

The three urban Commonwealth funded Respiratory Clinics are now open. The clinics will assess and examine patients of all ages and provide COVID-19 testing, if the patient is eligible. See the Department of Health [infographic](#) on GP Respiratory Clinics. Strictly by appointment only.

[Book online through HotDoc](#) or call the clinic via the phone numbers below:

- Adelaide Central Respiratory Clinic - 0401 142 608
- North Eastern Respiratory Clinic - 08 7089 5799
- Reynella Respiratory Clinic - 0478 455 771

Webinar COVID-19 Update Wednesday 22nd April 6pm – 7pm

Adelaide PHN, in conjunction with SA Health, SA Pathology, the RACGP and AMA(SA), will be hosting a live webinar at 6.00pm ACDT on Wednesday 22nd April to update all GPs in South Australia on the state's response to COVID-19. The topic for this week's webinar is clearance of COVID-19, with guest panellist Dr Santhosh Daniel, Infectious Diseases Specialist at Flinders Medical Centre. All practice staff are welcome to attend, including practice nurses and practice managers.

When: Apr 22, 2020 06:00 PM Adelaide

Topic: COVID-19 Update - Clearance of COVID-19

Register [here](#).

Useful resource links from SA Health website – live documents

[Metropolitan Referral Unit - COVID-19 Remote Surveillance Referral \(PDF 80KB\)](#)

[General Practice guideline for assessment and testing of patients who telephone the practice seeking care \(PDF 208KB\)](#)

[Health Professionals factsheet - medicine supply on a digital image of a prescription \(PDF 141KB\)](#)

[Guidance for GPs on pathways for COVID-19 positive patients \(PDF 153KB\)](#)

[Guiding Principles Maintaining Immunisation Fact Sheet \(PDF 144KB\)](#)

[Patient Information Pack - Positive Test for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(PDF 624KB\)](#)

[Testing Clinic Descriptions \(PDF 153KB\)](#)

Telephone numbers

SA COVID-19 Information line: 1800 253 787

SA COVID-19 Social and non-clinical support: 1300 705 336

Dr Danny Byrne and Dr Emily Kirkpatrick

SA Health COVID-19 GP Liaisons

Department for Health and Wellbeing

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019



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SA Health