



**News from the Covid-19 AFC Response Team
Monday, 30 March 2020
Newsletter 1**

There is much published 'noise' in the battle against Covid-19. This is often good and useful material but you are busy doing your work and at times it is difficult to filter.

We will try to produce a semi regular short summary with important highlights every day or two. Please let us know if there are questions that you would like answered.

There will be sections that can be read alone and still be useful.

CURRENT SITUATION

Globally

- Internationally there are approximately 735,000 proven cases and over 35,000 deaths so far.
- Globally mortality is approximately 5%.
- The rate of increase of test positive cases remains exponential. To put it another way. To increase from 200K to 300K cases took about 4 days, 300K to 400K took about 3 days and the most recent 100K increase took 2 days.

Nationally

- As at 6:00am on 30 March 2020, there have been 4,093 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Australia. 284 cases have been identified in the previous 24 hours. There have been 16 deaths reported.
- Australian mortality stands at approximately 0.4%

Locally

- There are a total of 299 confirmed cases in South Australia. At present there a total of 4 cases in SA who have recorded no interstate or overseas travel and are classed as local transmission.
- Many cases have been linked to the Barossa Region (see below) and Ruby Princess cruise ship.
- There are 6 patients in the ICU at the RAH who are COVID-19 positive. Hydroxychloroquine is being used to treat some of these patients.
- Currently there have been no reported COVID-19 related deaths.

PREDICTIONS

- Globally, we would suggest that there will soon be 100K new cases per day and that this rate is still rising.
- Internationally, it is hard to predict accurately, however there are several mathematical models available to determine COVID-19 cases predictively and whether interventions such as 'social distancing' are working.
- In the media, there is an emphasis on plotting the '**number of new cases**' against '**time**'. This tells us nothing about whether our social distancing methods are working or not.
- Perhaps a more complete way is to look at the '**number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past week**' vs. '**the total confirmed cases to date**'. When plotted in this way, exponential growth is represented as a straight line that slopes upwards. We can see when exponential growth stops in specific countries - they fall off the exponential growth 'path'. An interactive tool can be found here:

<https://aatishb.com/covidtrends/>

Notice that when plotted this way, almost all countries follow a very similar path of exponential growth.

- The USA is now the nation with the highest number of cases. The total number doubled from 50,000 to 100,000 in 4 days. When the President offers 100,000 respirators in 100 days he is missing the point. They don't have 100 days. We can but grieve for the tragedy unfolding for the American people.
- Australia is still on an exponential curve and predictions of 10,000 cases by Easter look likely to be correct at the moment. Fortunately, our mortality is <0.5%.



PRACTICAL TOPICS

Billing for Your Work

- All GP's can bill all patients for telephone or video consults.
- News about telehealth billing and item numbers can be found here:

<https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/professional/racgp-secures-500-m-to-help-general-practice-fight>

- We will very shortly have a page in Best Practice where you can be booked to work from home on phone consults.
- A number of GP's are volunteering to give hours from home. Thank you for that. We predict that the need will only grow.
- Instead of nurses sending recall letters for care plans/reviews/home assessments, they can now call patients and perform these assessments over the phone.
- All practices will have desktops capable of video conferencing. We will make sure this happens this week.
- Gaps and private fees can now be applied to telehealth consultations.
- Instead of excepting patients to come back for results we can call them with results and charge a consultation fees.
- A summary of the telehealth items has been attached below.



CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

- SA Health has identified several COVID-19 'hotspots' within the Barossa region these include: Tanunda, Nuriootpa, Williamstown, Angaston and Lyndoch.
- Testing criteria now includes those individuals who were in those areas from Saturday 14 March 2020 on-wards and who develop symptoms.
- For areas associated with the Barossa region COVID-19 cluster please see:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/protecting+public+health/alerts/health+alerts/coronavirus+disease+%28covid-19%29+update+15>

- The Chief Executive of SA Health has issued a direction in relation to visitors to aged care facilities which applies to all providers of residential aged care in South Australia and is consistent with the restrictions announced by the Prime Minister.
- **Importantly, a person may not enter a nursing home if:**
 - During the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, the person arrived in SA from a place outside of SA; or
 - During the 14 days immediately preceding entry, the person had known contact with a person who was confirmed COVID-19 or the person has a temperature greater than 37.5 degrees, or symptoms of an acute respiratory infection; or
 - From 1 May 2020 – the person has not been vaccinated against 2020 seasonal influenza; or
 - The person is aged under 16 years, other than in circumstances where the person's presence at the premises is for the purpose of end of life support for a resident of the residential aged care facility.
 - The SA Health direction regarding nursing home care during COVID-19 pandemic can be found here:
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https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/bfb52d92-0a09-4f85-9e08-228f6ae52609/Emergency+Management+%28Residential+Aged+Care+Facilities%29+%28COVID-19%29+Direction+2020_FINAL.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-bfb52d92-0a09-4f85-9e08-228f6ae52609-n4uTnvk

OTHER NEWS

- South Australians with COVID-19 and requiring community care can be accommodated at the Marion Holiday Park.
- As part of the initiative, Flinders Medical Centre (FMC) Hospital @ Home nurses and specialist consultants will review and assess isolated patients and families at a larger scale in a family friendly space at the Marion Holiday Park.
- More information can be found on the Premier of SA website:
<https://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news/media-releases/news/strong-plan-to-ease-hospital-pressure-amid-coronavirus>
- A pin prick blood test which can identify if a patient is COVID-19 positive in under 15 minutes will start rolling out in Australia this week.
- The rapid diagnostic test can identify COVID-19 antibodies very early – within two to four days of infection.
- For more information please visit:
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/mar/24/rapid-covid-19-testing-kits-receive-urgent-approval-from-australian-regulator>
- A new App designed by Australian Government for up-to-date COVID-19 information for patients can be downloaded from their website:
<https://www.australia.gov.au>

FLU CLINIC





- Our first Northern 2020 flu clinic will be held on Friday 3rd of April 2020 at McIntyre Medical Clinic
- This will be a drive-through clinic with transportable containers arriving this Wednesday.
- Patients and caregivers will be asked to verbally consent to the procedure. Billings will proceed via best-practice as per usual billings.

COMMON QUERIES

- *“My spouse has become COVID-19 positive. I feel well. Can I still come to work and see patients face to face?”*
 - If you have had close contact with an individual who is COVID-19 positive, you must self-isolate for 14 days despite whether you have symptoms or not. Once you have self-isolated for 14 days and are symptom-free, you no longer need to self-isolate.
- *“My partner has become unwell with flu-like symptoms. They are currently awaiting a COVID-19 test. Can I come to work?”*
 - If you are a close contact of a person who is manifesting flu-like symptoms, please self-isolate until their test result is available. If it is negative, SA health guidance suggests that you no longer need to self-isolate. However, given the possibility of a false-negative result, it is suggested that you isolate for another 5-7 days (ensuring that your family member’s symptoms do not deteriorate).
- For more information regarding isolation rules see:
<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/ac4f9b81-b111-4f39-9a88-b695846aef13/COVID+FACT+SHEET+-+Information+on+home+isolation+v1.6.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-ac4f9b81-b111-4f39-9a88-b695846aef13-n4glewF>
- For further information regarding false negative results in COVID-19 PCR testing see:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2020/03/26/negative-coronavirus-test-result-doesnt-always-mean-you-arent-infected/>

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- If you have a topic that you believe is relevant to COVID-19 and applicable to our work processes, please send it through to Dr Renee Petrilli (renee.petrilli@australianfamilycare.com). These items will be distributed via our COVID-19 newsletter.
- Please note the design of our new COVID-19 logo above. It reflects the barrier between the SARS-Cov-2 virus and ourselves as individuals, as a family, and as a community. We endeavour to uphold this barrier through effective preparation, planning and response.

ETHOS

- Our ultimate aim is safety for our patients, our families, our community and ourselves. If we are not well we are unable to care for others.

Dr Renee Petrilli and Dr Brian Symon



Telehealth Items 30 Mar 2020	Equivalent Num	Telehealth	Telephone	Rebate
GENERAL CONSULTATIONS				
Short <5 mins	3	91790	91795	\$20.55
Standard <20 mins	23	91800	91809	\$44.90
Long 20-40 mins	36	91801	91810	\$87.00
Prolonged >40 mins	44	91802	91811	\$128.05
CARE PLANS				
GP Management Plan	721	92024	92068	\$172.40
Team Care Arrangement	723	92025	92069	\$136.60
Review of GPMP/TCA	732	92028	92072	\$86.10
MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATIONS				
Psychological strategies 30-40 mins		91818	91842	\$110.85
Psychological strategies >40 mins		91819	91843	\$158.60
GP MENTAL HEALTH PLANS				
GPMHCP 20-40 mins (with training)	2715	92116	92128	\$108.80
GPMHCP >40mins (with training)	2717	92117	92129	\$160.25
Review of GPMHCP	2712	92114	92126	\$85.70
Mental health consultation >20 mins	2713	92115	92127	\$85.70
GPMHCP 20-40 mins (without training)		92112	92124	\$85.70
GPMHCP >40mins (without training)		92113	92125	\$125.15
ATSI HEALTH ASSESSMENT	715	92004	92016	\$253.70
ANTENATAL				
Pregnancy support counselling >20 mins		92136	92138	\$91.55
Antenatal attendance	16500	91853	91858	\$47.90
Postnatal check 4-8 weeks with mental health (>20 mins)		91851	91856	\$72.85
URGENT AFTER HOURS ATTENDANCE		92210	92216	\$182.85
AUTISM MANAGEMENT PLAN		92142	92145	\$160.75
CONTRIBUTION TO EXTERNAL PLANS				
Contribution to multidisciplinary Plan		92026	92070	\$84.15
Contribution to MD plan in aged care / prior to hospital discharge		92027	92071	\$84.15
EATING DISORDERS				
Eating Disorder plan 20-40 mins (with training)		92148	92156	\$108.80
Eating Disorder plan >40 mins (with training)		92149	92157	\$160.25
Eating Disorder plan 20-40 mins (without training)		92146	92154	\$85.70
Eating Disorder plan >40 mins (without training)		92147	92155	\$126.15
Review of Eating Disorders			92176	\$85.70
Eating disorders psychological strategies 30-40 mins		92182	92194	\$110.85
Eating disorders psychological strategies 30-40 mins		92184	92196	\$158.60