

COVID-19+ Home Visiting and Telehealth Service

[Referral pathway and eligibility criteria for GPs and RACFs](#)

[Referral pathway and eligibility criteria for GPs and PPHs](#)

Service Description

Background

The Australian Government is taking further steps to support and strengthen the health system as we open up to living with COVID-19 under phases B and C of the National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response. With a highly vaccinated population, most COVID-19 positive people will have mild to moderate symptoms and therefore will be appropriately managed in the community, through general practice, by their regular general practitioner (GP) where possible.

To support the management of COVID-19-positive people, WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) has commissioned clinical service providers, including medical deputising services (MDS) and nursing services, to complete face to face home visits and telehealth services (referred to in this document as the home visiting service) when a GP, (including those operating in a GP Respiratory Clinic), may not have capacity, or a person needs to be seen during the after-hours period.

Scope

The scope of the home visiting service is to include assessment and management, where clinically indicated, of COVID-19 symptoms as well as assessment and treatment relating to other health conditions that require attention, while a COVID-19 positive person is isolating or within 30 days post COVID-19 diagnosis. This includes, but is not limited to, deteriorating health conditions, injury, wound care, and chronic disease care.

The service

The home visiting service is not intended to be for routine monitoring and care, which should in most instances be delivered via telehealth by a patient's regular GP or primary care provider, but rather one-off or exceptional circumstance visits to provide a service to COVID-19 positive patients, with the intent that the service will help avoid unnecessary escalation of COVID-19 positive patients to hospital. Exceptional circumstances are defined as the home visit being required to avoid an unnecessary escalation to hospital, and when the managing GP is not themselves able to deliver the home visit.

Eligibility criteria

The home visiting service is limited to people within Western Australia with a current COVID-19 diagnosis, or diagnosed with COVID-19 within 30 days prior to the referral, who are also:

- Residents of residential aged care facilities (RACFs);
- Residents of licensed private psychiatric hostels (PPHs);
- Homeless (street present), with alcohol and/or other drug related conditions, and isolating in State Quarantine Facilities (quarantine hotels).

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The referrer must establish the following:

1. That the patient potentially requires hospitalisation, but the GP is unable to determine that without a face-to-face assessment; *or*
2. That the patient is at risk of hospitalisation unless a home visit can be provided to offer a particular intervention. The hospitalisation risk may be related to an issue other than their COVID-19 diagnosis; *or*
3. The usual GP is unable to adequately assess a patient's condition via telehealth and deems that a home visit is required to complete the assessment (for example: a patient with dementia or communication difficulties); *or*
4. The usual GP is unable to undertake further assessment due to a lack of availability or competing priorities.

This service is not intended to duplicate or replace other services, where accessing those is the most appropriate pathway for support.

PPHs are defined by the Western Australia Department of Health, Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit as:

“Private premises in which three or more persons who are socially dependent because of mental illness; and are not members of the family of the proprietor of the premises; reside and are treated or cared for”.

RACFs are defined by the Australian Federal Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare as:

“A special-purpose facility which provides accommodation and other types of support, including assistance with day-to-day living, intensive forms of care, and assistance towards independent living, to frail and aged residents. Facilities are accredited by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd to receive funding from the Australian Government through residential aged care subsidies”.