

23 October 2025

Communicable Disease Section
Department of Health
50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, 3000
Victoria, Australia

Re: Feedback on the draft Victorian guideline on viral haemorrhagic fevers – Health Services Guide

Dear Communicable Disease Section,

On behalf of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Victorian Faculty, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Victorian guideline on viral haemorrhagic fevers – Health Services Guide.

RACGP Victoria welcomes the Department's work to strengthen Victoria's preparedness for viral haemorrhagic fevers (VHF) and appreciates the inclusion of primary care within the scope of this guideline. We support clear and practical protocols that protect both patients and health professionals in the event of suspected or confirmed cases.

However, we wish to raise the following concern regarding the advice provided to primary care services.

The guideline currently advises primary care providers to "refer to their Primary Health Networks and health pathways" for further guidance.

At present, HealthPathways in Victoria includes information specific only to Ebola virus disease and does not contain clinical or operational advice for other viral haemorrhagic fevers such as:

- Dengue fever
- Yellow fever
- Marburg virus disease
- Lassa fever
- Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever
- Lujo haemorrhagic fever

This omission renders the advice inadequate for primary care settings, especially given dengue fever is the most frequently encountered haemorrhagic fever in Australia. General practitioners (GPs) are often the first point of contact for patients presenting with febrile illness following overseas travel. It is therefore critical that primary care guidance be comprehensive, accessible, and aligned with current public health risks.



Recommendation

We recommend that the Department, in partnership with Primary Health Networks and the HealthPathways program, update and expand clinical pathways to include all relevant viral haemorrhagic fevers listed in this guideline.

This will ensure GPs and other primary care providers can rapidly access consistent information on case recognition, infection prevention and control, notification, and referral processes.

We thank you for considering this feedback and for your ongoing engagement with the general practice sector in strengthening communicable disease preparedness.

Kind regards,

Dr Anita Muñoz
Chair, RACGP Victoria