

Dear Employers/ School Principals/ Day Care Managers,

Doctors are unable to routinely provide patients with COVID 19 clearance.

The Australian government advice and guidelines recommend that COVID-19 testing resources are available to patients who show symptoms of COVID-19 or who have had close contact with a confirmed case.

At this time GPs cannot:

- provide clearance for people who have returned from overseas. In the first instance, returned travellers are required to quarantine for 14 days. After 14 days, and if there are NO symptoms, they are fit to return to work. State / territory departments of health may conduct screening during this time.
- provide clearance for well people who have had contact with unwell people (specifically, if the unwell person has NOT been diagnosed with COVID-19).

At this time, GPs can:

- facilitate assessment and testing for COVID-19, for patients who exhibit symptoms, particularly those who have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. The sharing of these results with an employer / school is at the discretion of the patient, however the patient will be legally required to self-isolate if the test is positive.

People with cold and flu like symptoms should not attend the workplace or school until symptoms have fully resolved and should be tested for COVID-19. Please encourage your employees / students to follow this advice.

As an **Employer/ School**, you can do your part to help during this difficult time by:

- enabling any and / or all employees to work from home by supporting flexible workplace arrangements
- supporting employees / students who develop a cold or mild respiratory illness to access sick leave, without requiring a medical review or clearance from extremely busy GP clinics
- making changes to how your business operates to be flexible for those staff who are high risk, such as immunosuppressed, to decrease their risk of exposure
- providing access for all employees / students to adequate hand washing facilities including alcohol based hand sanitiser
- informing all employees about the need to uphold social distancing and hygiene recommendations, including:
 - maintaining a safe distance between employees in the office at all times – 1.5m between each person is recommended
 - washing / sanitising hands between contact with different surfaces
 - avoiding touching the face
 - covering the mouth and nose if you sneeze and cough using the elbow (rather than the hand)
 - wiping down all hard surfaces in the workplace with detergent and water at least every 24 hours

We / I recommend you consider the need for requesting Medical Clearance/ Certificates at this time. These requests may increase unnecessary presentations to general practices and contribute to overburden of essential healthcare services at this time.

Sincerely,

The information set out in this publication is current at the date of first publication and is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular patients or circumstances. Nor is this publication exhaustive of the subject matter. It is no substitute for individual inquiry. Compliance with any recommendations does not guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. The RACGP and its employees and agents have no liability (including for negligence) to any users of the information contained in this publication.