

[Insert General Practice header]

[Insert date]

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 are unwell AND meet strict testing criteria.

This means that testing is not routinely available for all other patients.

This is to ensure that adequate supplies of healthcare resources including; testing kits, laboratory facilities, protective equipment and health care workers are available to those at greatest risk of infection.

At this time, in accordance with testing requirements Doctors cannot:

- Provide clearance for people who have returned from overseas. In the first instance, returned travellers are required to self-isolate for 14 days. After 14 days and if there are NO symptoms, they are fit to return to work, a medical certificate is not required.
- Provide clearance for well people who have had contact with unwell people (specifically, if the unwell person has NOT been diagnosed with COVID-19).
Our advice is for everyone to self-isolate if and when they develop any symptoms of a cold or flu and to telephone the GP for medical review.
- Provide testing for any patient with a MILD illness or cold-like symptoms **AND** no risk factors (no history of COVID 19 close contacts or recent travel). People are encouraged to take 'sick leave' as usual for a cold or flu like illness, and return to work once symptoms have fully resolved.

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

- Enabling employees/ students to self-isolate for 14 days if they meet the current government criteria (the most up to date criteria will be found on your local state government website)
- Enable any and/or all employees to work from home by supporting flexible workplace arrangements
- ***Consider 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***
- Make 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.
- Provide access for all staff/students to adequate hand washing facilities including alcohol hand gels
- Inform all employees about the need to uphold the following social distancing recommendations
 - Maintain a safe distance between employees in the office and during face to face meetings – 1.5m between each person is recommended

- Wash hands regularly between all contacts with surfaces
- Avoid touching the face (except after hand washing)
- Cover mouth and nose if you sneeze and cough using the elbow rather than the hand
- Wipe 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 and potentially unsafe presentations to general practices and contribute to overburden essential health care services at this time.

Other measures that you can assist as per Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC):

- Limit all organised outdoor gatherings to fewer than 500 people
- Limit all organised indoor gatherings to fewer than 100 people
- Limiting non-essential meetings or conferences of critical workforce
- Discourage any non-essential domestic travel
- Encouraging all Australians to exercise personal responsibility for social distancing measures
- Initiating measures to assist the community in protecting vulnerable populations from exposure to COVID 19 (such as those over 70, people suffering from chronic illnesses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged over 50 and all those who are pregnant).

Sincerely,

[insert Doctor or General Practice Name]

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