

# New GP respiratory clinics

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Wednesday 15 December 2021



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# New respiratory clinics to reduce pressure on hospitals

In October 2021, the Victorian Government announced funding for:

- ▶ **20 additional GP respiratory clinics** to open in priority LGAs in metropolitan Melbourne
- ▶ **existing GP respiratory clinics** in areas with high COVID-19 caseloads **to extend their operating hours** to include after-hours operations
- ▶ New GP respiratory clinics **are being commissioned by Primary Health Networks**

## The clinics will:

- ✓ Supports increased local access to respiratory assessments and immediate care for people of all ages.
- ✓ Provides GPs with a referral option for patients who require face to face respiratory assessments if their practice is unable to do so.
- ✓ Expands primary care access for people with low acuity respiratory symptom by providing an alternative pathway for care other than an emergency department.

# New state-funded GP respiratory clinics

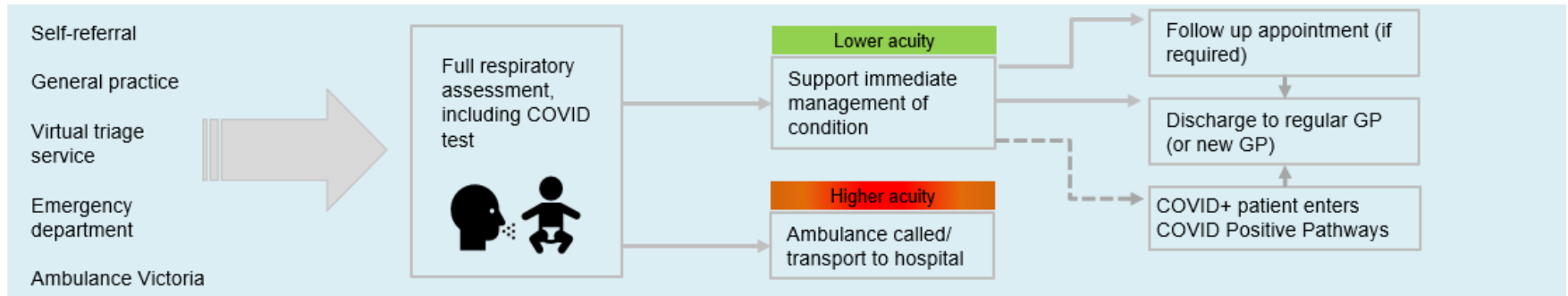


## Key features of clinics

- ▶ **Supports people of all ages** (including children) with low acuity respiratory symptoms
- ▶ **Respiratory assessments offered**, including testing for COVID-19
- ▶ **Open extended hours** – after hours and on weekends
- ▶ Staffed by **GPs and nurses**
- ▶ **Located in priority LGAs with high caseloads and high respiratory presentations to ED**
- ▶ Available to those **with or without a Medicare card**, at no cost to the patient
- ▶ Services accessible via **pre-booked appointment** (phone or online booking system) and **‘walk up’**

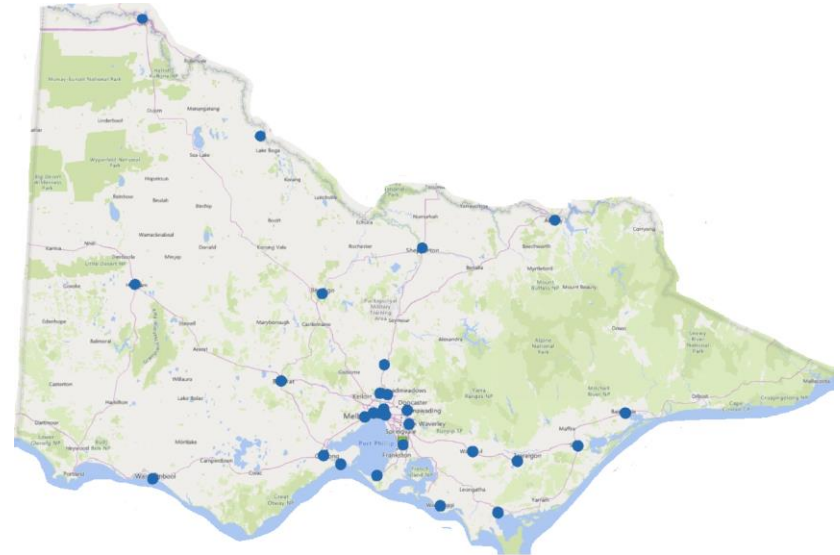
# GP respiratory clinics – patient pathway

- ▶ **Provides** GPs with a **referral option** for patients who require face to face respiratory assessments and immediate care support, if a practice is unable to provide this
- ▶ **GP to GP referral** - patients referred back to existing GP following episode of care at respiratory clinic, or supported to **engage with a new GP** if they don't have one
- ▶ Patients may **self-refer** to clinics, or be **advised/supported to access services through existing services**, e.g. Nurse on Call, general practices, Ambulance Victoria, hospitals
- ▶ Patients who test positive for COVID-19 **will be supported to access the COVID Positive Pathway Program**



# Extending operating hours of existing GP respiratory clinics

- ▶ There are **28 existing Commonwealth-funded GP respiratory clinics across the state** – including 18 in regional Victoria
- ▶ **Grants will be available** to support these clinics to **extend their operating hours** to include evenings and weekends
- ▶ Clinics must be offering **full respiratory assessments to be eligible**
- ▶ A grants process will be **run by the Victorian Department of Health** in December 2021/January 2022, with extended operating hours expected from early 2022



# Locations and commissioning process - new GP respiratory clinics



## Location of new clinics

### North-western Melbourne region

Hume  
Wyndham  
Brimbank  
Moreland  
Darebin  
Moonee Valley  
Melbourne  
Maribyrnong  
Melton

### South-eastern Melbourne region

Casey  
Greater Dandenong  
Monash  
Kingston  
Cardinia

### Eastern and north-eastern Melbourne region

Whittlesea  
Banyule  
Boroondara



## Commissioning process

- ▶ Standing up of new clinics – **partnership** between the **Victorian Department of Health and Primary Health Networks (PHNs)**
- ▶ Clinics are being **commissioned through the metropolitan Melbourne based PHNs** – North Western Melbourne PHN, Eastern Melbourne PHN and South Eastern Melbourne PHN
- ▶ An **EOI process** was run, with **33 submissions received**
- ▶ Clinics will **progressively open from December 2021** and run for seven months

# Resources and support

- ✓ An advisory group, with representation from existing GP respiratory clinics, RACGP Victorian Faculty and PHNs, is **advising on the roll out of the new clinics.**
- ✓ The group is supporting the development of a **suite of resources and support material** for the new GP respiratory clinics, in the areas of;
  - ✓ Infection prevention and control
  - ✓ Training and support
  - ✓ Workforce configuration/staffing profile
  - ✓ Patient flow
  - ✓ Promotion of the clinics
- ✓ These resources will be **broadly accessible**, and will contribute to supporting the delivery of safe respiratory care in general practice settings

Keep vigilant, even in a vaccinated population, screening, testing and public health measures still apply

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# Impact and promotion of GP respiratory clinics



## Impact of clinics

- ▶ PHNs will collect data to **monitor performance and evaluate impact**
- ▶ In addition to standard demographic data, responses will be sought from patients that will enable an assessment of **whether clinics are achieving objectives**, i.e.,
  - ▶ How did you hear about the clinic?
  - ▶ Do you have a regular GP?
  - ▶ Where would you have gone if you has not come here?
- ▶ Other measures are being considered that will **enable a broader assessment of patient and systems impacts**



## Promotion of clinics

- ▶ The department and PHNs will work to **promote community and sector awareness** of the GP respiratory clinics
- ▶ Community members will receive clear information on the **purpose of the clinics** within the broader COVID-19 sector response.
- ▶ Targeted promotion and engagement will be undertaken to ensure **priority populations** (e.g. culturally and linguistically diverse populations) are reached
- ▶ **Individual GP respiratory clinics** may also undertake their own **promotion and engagement**



# Links to resources

The new and existing GPRCs will be updated here as clinics open

- List and map of local new COVID-19 GP respiratory clinics and hospital respiratory clinics <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/gp-respiratory-clinics-and-hospital-respiratory-clinics-covid-19>
- Find your nearest PCR COVID-19 testing test <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/where-get-tested-covid-19>
- Murray PHN Infection Prevention Helpline Service available for general practice  
Call 1800 312 968 9am –5pm weekdays, or <https://www.murrayphn.org.au/ipc/>
- Information and resources to support GPs <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/primary-care-guidance-for-the-response-to-covid-19-risks#minimising-exposure-to-covid-19-in-primary-care-settings>
- Links to Victoria COVID-19 updates <https://www.racgp.org.au/coronavirus/vic>
- Victorian HealthPathways resources <https://vtphna.org.au/carepathways/> / [HealthPathways Melbourne](#)

# Questions and discussion



# Thank you for participating tonight

Next webinar Wednesday 19th January 2022, 6pm- 7pm  
**COVID-19 vaccines and children aged 5-11 years of age**  
**What GPs need to know**

A/Prof Margie Danchin

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday with family and friends.  
We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.



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Information is available in 50+ community languages at [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translations](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translations)

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