



Queensland GP Alliance

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

NEW COVID PLANS NEED TO BE PROPERLY RESOURCED

Queensland GPs are calling for proper resourcing and communication of changing COVID-19 management plans, frustrated at the lack of action on provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and fit testing for GPs and their staff.

GPs are preparing to take on increased responsibility for caring for COVID-positive patients as the Omicron variant is escalating the number of positive cases much faster than anticipated.

The Queensland GP Alliance acknowledges that this is a rapidly changing situation and plans will change at short notice. However, plans cannot work without resources and communication.

GPs need clarity on how the changed definition of a close contact affects health care workers who knowingly come into contact with COVID-positive patients.

The sudden announcement of the close contact change, along with the decision to restrict PCR tests when rapid antigen test kits are in short supply, shows that governments have not learned the lessons of the past two years.

Queensland GPs have also been advised that Commonwealth vaccines ordered by today may not arrive until 14 January. The vaccine rollout for 5-11-year-olds is scheduled to begin on 10 January.

Following GP Alliance advocacy, Queensland Health has rolled out unprecedented support to keep the adult vaccination process going. However, many GPs are not taking bookings for children's vaccinations until their supplies arrive, having learnt from past experience.

The Queensland GP Alliance is calling for:

- provision of fit testing for GPs and their staff
- written advice from Queensland Health for GPs' management of contact with positive persons to minimise the risk of temporary practice closure
- release of plans to manage COVID-19 in rural and remote and First Nations communities
- engagement of Queensland GPs in Queensland Health management plans including developing plain language resources
- establish a dedicated hotline for GPs seeking advice to assist COVID patients in the community.

GPs and practice staff are already overworked and exhausted. We need properly resourced and supported plans for managing COVID-19 in the community to keep as many cases as possible out of our stretched public hospitals. All levels of the health care system must be fully deployed and resourced.

We must leave the old approaches to planning behind in 2021 and start the New Year with proper engagement, resourcing and communication.

For further information and to arrange comment:

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Queensland GP Alliance is a collaboration between the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), the Australian Medical Association Queensland, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ).