

## **GP HOTLINE FOR COVID PATIENTS NEEDED**

**Media Release**  
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AMA Queensland is calling for a dedicated hotline for GPs dealing with COVID-positive patients in the community as COVID cases increase in Queensland.

While there is a good hotline available for patients needing advice, GPs need an exclusive, direct line to get advice for treating COVID patients.

“We appreciate the work and planning that has gone into preparing Queenslanders for the inevitable COVID outbreaks that we are now seeing,” AMA Queensland President, Professor Chris Perry, said.

“With COVID cases spreading across the State, GPs are ready to help manage patients outside of hospital settings.

“However, we need to have a dedicated line that GPs can call to get advice quickly if a patient is deteriorating or needs immediate transfer to a hospital, particularly in regional and rural areas.”

AMA Queensland Council of General Practice Chair Dr Maria Boulton said public health physicians are stretched to capacity managing calls from doctors and patients.

“The consumer hotline is a good step forward but our GPs need better support,” Dr Boulton said.

“Currently, GPs can call their local public health unit, but doctors there are already flat out, and we can be on hold for a long time.

“We need to be able to just pick up the phone and get immediate advice while the patient is sitting in front of us or is still on the line for a telehealth consult.”

AMA Queensland has been working with Queensland Health on the COVID Community Care Pathway, which will come into effect in mid-to-late January to keep COVID patients out of hospital.

“We need more assurances about the level of personal protective equipment (PPE), rapid antigen tests and other resources that will be provided to GPs and their practice staff who are treating known COVID patients,” Dr Boulton said.

“We also need to ensure that our regional and rural communities have the supplies and workforce that they need to manage any COVID outbreaks.

“Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia and one GP may be the only medical service for hundreds of people. Our regional health care workers must be properly resourced to ensure they can care for their communities.”

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