

APA COVID-19 Update – 13 August 2020

Key messages

The APA gave powerful evidence to the Royal Commission Inquiry into the Impact of COVID-19 on Aged Care hearing on Tuesday. The message that physiotherapists must be enabled to address physical, mental and cognitive deterioration of older people using their full scope of practice has been heard. It has also featured prominently in the media.

With the tightening of advice about the use of PPE in NSW, the APA recommends members in NSW adhere to their COVIDSafe plans and consider wearing masks when treating patients, even where 1.5m distance can be maintained. As already stated, healthcare workers employed by NSW Health must wear PPE at all times.

Medibank has announced an indefinite extension of telehealth rebates for allied health practitioners. BUPA has also announced that telehealth rebates for allied health are “here to stay”.

A Victorian COVID-19 Update will arrive in Victorian member inboxes soon.

Latest government announcements			
Measure	Detail	Date	More information
More support for Stage 4 businesses and workers	Prime Minister announces amendments to financial assistance for Melbourne businesses.	07/08/20	Media release
Additional support for NDIS providers and participants	Temporary measures for NDIS participants and providers in Victoria to ensure continuity of services in a COVIDSafe setting announced	11/08/20	Media release
COVID Taskforce is seeking your views	What do you think about the Australian National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce website, and the guidelines and flowcharts for care of people with COVID-19? You can see them at covid19evidence.net.au The National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce want to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in the work of the Taskforce and their guidelines and flowcharts. The taskforce are inviting Australian healthcare practitioners to participate in a brief (15 minute) survey. Your participation is voluntary, anonymous, and very much appreciated before Monday, August 17.		Survey
ACT: Canberra Hospital expansion to create 500 jobs	New emergency, surgical and critical healthcare building to be constructed.	11/08/20	Media release
NSW: New SafeWork advisory group established	New Family and Injured Worker Support Group established to advise SafeWork NSW on the types of support given to those affected by workplace incidents, what services are available and how to access them, ways to improve service	11/08/20	Media release

	delivery, as well as advocating for increased workplace safety in NSW's communities.		
NSW: Moratorium on hotel quarantine fee for NSW residents returning from Victoria	NSW residents returning from Victoria will have their hotel quarantine fee waived for the next month to ease the financial burden on returnees.	12/08/20	Media release
NSW: Auditor General's report on health sending	The Auditor General for New South Wales has examined whether NSW Health effectively planned and delivered major capital works to meet the demand for health services in New South Wales.	12/08/20	Report
QLD: COVID testing in pharmacies pilot	Trial to commence to increase testing capability.	13/08/20	Media release
SA: Rejuvenated repat ready to open	Construction of two complex dementia wards has been completed.	10/08/20	Media release
Victoria			
Mental health support for businesses and workers	Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford today announced details of a \$26 million program addressing the mental health needs of sole traders and small and medium business owners and their workers.	12/08/20	Media release
Aged Care allied health support	DHHS is seeking urgent support from qualified allied health professionals to care for people residing in public and private residential aged care facilities. This support involves the provision of basic care (such as bathing, dressing, continence management, mobility/transfers and feeding) for confirmed/suspected COVID positive residents and non-COVID residents. Varying shifts are available		Details
Call to test service launched	In-home COVID testing for vulnerable Victorians		Details
DHHS updated guidance	The APA keeps you informed of updates as they happen. The latest DHHS guidance, including the inclusion of health workers (including allied health) providing care to people with a chronic disease management plan, can be found on its website.		DHHS FAQs
State information on easing COVID-19 restrictions			

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Latest advocacy and emerging issues

Area	Action	Deadline	Details
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health	The ATSIHC will be hosting another yarning session on Thursday 3 September at 6pm AEST. These sessions offer a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander physiotherapists to connect, debrief and grow alongside each other. The sessions also offer the opportunity to express the positives, negatives and all of the in-between experienced during this time.		Website
Aged care	<p>Following our initial submission to the Royal Commission Inquiry into the Impact of COVID-19 on Aged Care, the APA was invited to give evidence and submit further information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a comprehensive and detailed supplementary submission following extensive consultation with members via online survey, targeted interviews and in broader consultation with other allied health peaks. Board Director Rik Dawson gave evidence at the Royal Commission hearing on Tuesday afternoon where detail the physical deterioration experienced by older people as a result of pandemic measures and the value of physiotherapy in addressing this. The APA Communications team distributed a media release calling for immediate action to enable physiotherapists to deliver full scope of practice to older people in resi care. As a result, the APA was featured on ABC News 24 TV, ABC Radio and in The Age. <p>The Department of Health is currently conducting a Review of the Restraint Principles to consider the effectiveness of the regulatory arrangements in minimising the use of physical and chemical restraints in residential aged care. National Gerontology Chair Vanessa Jessup and Amy Hill APAM will represent the APA in upcoming consultations.</p>		Initial submission Supplementary submission APA media release The Age article
Consultation invitation	The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) is calling for feedback on the draft National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards Guide for Community Health Services .		Survey

	The Commission invites feedback from all who work in community health services implementing the NSQHS Standards. This includes clinicians, managers, safety and quality officers, health departments, private hospital groups, technical experts, accrediting agencies and consumers.		
DVA	<p><i>Active Choices</i> is a research initiative led by <i>The University of Queensland</i> (UQ). The initiative aims to link and empower DVA clients towards physical activity opportunities within their local communities.</p> <p>The UQ team is currently seeking to partner with Brisbane-based exercise physiology and physiotherapy service providers, to offer access to the <i>Active Choices</i> support program for DVA clients who are interested in self-managing their physical activity. The program may also benefit DVA clients seeking to reconnect with their local communities following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Benefits of being involved in the initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a 12-week behavioural support program that can help your clients manage physical activity; • Development of social networks and connections for your clients within local active communities; • Financial support for your clients to access group-based physical activities. <p>If you are interested in partnering with UQ on <i>Active Choices</i>, or want to find out more about the initiative and its benefits, contact the Senior Research Assistant, Dr Zoe Papinczak, either by email z.papinczak@uq.edu.au or telephone 07 3365 7453.</p>		<u>Information</u>
NDIS	<p>Submissions</p> <p>The APA has provided a submission to the Disability Royal Commission on the topic of Emergency Planning and Response.</p> <p>The APA has provided a submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission on an enquiry into the NDIS.</p> <p>We are currently working on a submission to the Joint Standing Committee's inquiry into the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.</p> <p>NDIA Independent Assessors</p> <p>The APA is involved in the review of the Independent Assessor project due for roll-out at the start of October.</p> <p>Early Childhood Early Intervention Reset Project</p> <p>The APA has been invited to a meeting on Monday, 17 August to discuss the ECEI Reset project.</p>		

	<p>JMF grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content development for the online modules that will form part of the JMF grant deliverables is progressing nicely. The course should be publicly available at the start of October. Filming for the awareness campaign is currently on hold, due to government restrictions in Victoria. <p>COVID-19</p> <p>The APA continues to advocate for Victorian physiotherapists working under the NDIS affected by Stage 3 and 4 restrictions.</p> <p>PPE</p> <p>Providers and self-managed participants who use PPE as a regular part of their support arrangements should continue to access PPE through their usual channels. Where this is no longer possible, self-managed participants and providers can contact the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) to request face masks and PPE at NDISCOVIDPPE@health.gov.au</p>		More information
Telehealth	<p>Ongoing advocacy and the telehealth evaluation continues.</p> <p>Medibank has announced an indefinite extension of telehealth rebates for allied health practitioners. BUPA has also announced that telehealth rebates are “here to stay”.</p>		
Victorian lock down	The APA is working with the Victorian Chief Allied Health Officer, the Department of Health & Human Services and PHNs to stay abreast of lockdown restrictions.		Website Latest APA FAQs
Professional development			
New title	A new title is being introduced to recognise our members who have successfully completed an Australian post-graduate research qualification at master’s level or higher. The non-clinical ‘APA Research Physiotherapist’ is available through the academic pathway to titling, and forms part of the pathway to Fellowship by Original Contribution.	01/07/20	Information
Introductory Women’s Health Physiotherapy Level 1 course	The APA’s Women’s Men’s and Pelvic Health (WMPH group) are rolling out a new suite of online courses that consist of highly contemporary and relevant information for physiotherapists practising in these areas. The Introductory Women’s Health Physiotherapy Level 1 course is available through CPD4Physios.		CPD4Physios
Free eTalk for members: Looking after yourself	Looking after yourself is very important to achieve and maintain good mental health. During times of stress and worry, self-care is even more important, but		CPD4Physios

during times of worry and stress	unfortunately also more challenging. This talk will focus on ways to look after your mental health during worrying and stressful times.		
Free online learning modules	There are 80 free member eTalks and online learning modules available. The learning modules can be found in the eTalks category and a new category on cpd4physio called Free Learning.		CPD4Physios
Live lecture series	To ensure that learning can continue during these times, we are pleased to introduce our new online APA Lectures – Live offering which is essentially our usual evening lectures that are now being delivered live online.		Details
Professional Development (PD)	Our library of online professional development offerings is continuing to grow. Head to www.cpd4physios.com.au . We are also constantly monitoring and adjusting to jurisdictional restrictions to be able to safely deliver face-to-face PD where possible. The safety of our participants, members and communities is our top priority. As such, several new protocols have been introduced throughout our training facilities to adhere to the COVID-19 Safety Plan. See our current list of face-to-face PD at https://australian.physio/pd Alternative methods of delivering our traditional of face-to-face courses is being evaluated.		Details Details

Communications

Third iteration of member survey	Members received a final survey this week to finalise our information gathering to support member needs over the coming 12 months		Ecomms
Factsheet on worker movements	Factsheet on movement of healthcare workers and health service employees during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.	8/8/2020	
COVID-19 Primary Care and Allied Health webinar	Was held on 12 August. The panel provided key updates and answer participants' questions. The discussion for this webinar will focus on the situation in Victoria and wearing masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.		Weblink
Tips to help your kids understand covid-19	Struggling to discuss COVID-19 with your kids? You're not alone. Preliminary findings from a Monash University study has shown many families are struggling to answer their children's questions or hoping schools provide the information. Thanks to the researchers at Monash Education , here are some simple, yet effective tips to help your kids understand.		Weblink
Decision making tree for essential treatment	To support you in your clinical judgement over the next six weeks of stage 4 restrictions we have developed a decision making tree with criteria for essential treatment.		Weblink
Information for NSW members re gym marshalls	The intention of the NSW Health directive is to ensure gyms have proper hygiene practices and maintain adequate social distancing. The definition of what constitutes a 'gym' isn't clear. However, it makes sense that physio practices with high traffic, those that run groups and classes and/or have large 'gym' spaces		Weblink

	demonstrate their commitment to COVID infection control and complete a COVID safe plan.		
New guidance on the use of face masks and shields	The Department of Health has published new guidance on the use of face masks and shields by healthcare workers in areas with significant community transmission of COVID--19. The guideline can be found on the Department of Health website		Weblink
Business resources			
Updated HR in Practice restrictions guide	Updated guide here from HR in Practice for VIC stage 4 and stage 3 workplace relations matters for Victorian members		Guide
Updated Working from Home resource	In light of recent developments recognising family and domestic violence as a key work health and safety issue (which is particularly challenging to manage in the current environment where employees may be working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic), HR In Practice has updated our working from home resource pack to include information for business owners and employees to assess and manage the risks associated with this issue.		Available for Victorian members on APA website
Victorian members - free access to HR Portal	HR Portal connects people and organisations to expert advice through our online resource database. This resource is usually available to the APA Business Group Members only, however during these uncertain times, HR Portal has been made accessible to APA members who are affected by the stage 3 restrictions in Victoria. APA members can access the portal by visiting the APA Tools webpage section and selecting HR Portal within the <i>Business group resources</i> section of the page.		More information
HR case study	HR In Practice case study: The piece – which outlines that primary facts of the case, highlights the implications of the proceedings for members' practices and underlines important considerations for members to mitigate their risk – is accompanied by a microlearning session scheduled for release soon.		Details
JobKeeper and FWA microlearning	New microlearning from HR in Practice available on HR in Practice Portal		HR in Practice Portal
Coronavirus guide	The HR In Practice Coronavirus Guides for members has been updated.	12/05/20	Updated guide
Workplace health and safety	New microlearning from HR In Practice		Youtube
Business continuity	Updated business content as below from William Buck on Business continuity on COVID19 page		Resources
Other resources			
Federal government mental health resource	Head to Health provides links to trusted Australian online and phone supports, resources and treatment options.		Resource

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines for outbreaks in residential care facilities	Communicable Diseases Network Australia have updated their guidelines.	12/06/20	Details
AHPA Telehealth Guidelines	AHPA has published a useful and succinct guide to telehealth service delivery for allied health practitioners.		Guidelines
Lifeline Webinar	This webinar will give practitioners more insights into mental health (especially depression) and how this may be affecting their patients, family, friends, colleagues or themselves.	22/07/20	Details
APA Hydrotherapy Guidelines	The Aquatic Physiotherapy Committee and several other prominent Aquatic physiotherapists have developed the following document for the provision of hydrotherapy during this time.		Guidelines
APA Telehealth Guidelines	The APA Telehealth Guidelines is a comprehensive document that clearly outlines how telehealth should be conducted by practitioners.		Telehealth Guidelines
JoP clinical practice recommendations	Physiotherapy management for COVID-19 in the acute hospital setting		Resource