

Tuesday 28th July 2020 1600 hours

Important information for all General Practices, Community Pharmacies, Community Nursing and Aged Care Facilities – Please share this with everyone in your team

Surveillance Testing Guidelines

- The Ministry are concerned about the drop-off in community surveillance testing. They are using robust modelling to back this widespread approach to surveillance and they ask that we continue to encourage people to get tested if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Canterbury GPs have been doing an excellent job of maintaining a consistent level of surveillance testing. We understand testing interrupts an already busy work-flow and in many cases patients are declining to be swabbed. However, where possible, we ask that you do continue to offer and encourage testing, or refer to CBAC if you are unable.
- We are supporting this by maintaining a CBAC presence and mobile capacity (mobile testing for HIS only). You can continue to refer patients via ERMS if you do not have capacity to swab patients yourselves, or they can attend the Whānau Ora CBAC on Pages Road, which is operating this week between 9am-5pm without an appointment.
- We are working on the medium-term plan and will send out further communications when this is finalised.
- Please note that people working at the borders and in isolation facilities are being advised to contact their general practice or attend a CBAC if they become symptomatic. This is to make sure that they do not attend work whilst unwell and to ensure they access appropriate clinical care. Please make sure that these people are able to access testing in a timely manner, either at your practice or through a CBAC.

Key points:

- Offer testing to **all** people seen in primary care who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. (Local variance maintains only testing children who are High Index of Suspicion (HIS) or after discussion with parents; testing is still requested and only if not contraindicated.)
- People meeting both the clinical and HIS criteria must be tested and notified to Community & Public Health.
- The following groups should be particularly encouraged and supported to be tested:
 - Those more likely to have severe consequences with COVID-19, including: seniors (those who are over 70 years old); Māori, Pasifika, and those with significant pre-existing conditions.
 - Health care workers and aged residential care staff.
- See the Ministry guidelines document for health professionals (particularly note pages 6-8) at:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/updated-advice-for-health-professionals-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-24july2020.pdf>

PPE Orders

- We continue to recognise the importance of supporting general practice teams with PPE for COVID-19 assessment activities. To increase ordering efficiency and distribution, from the week commencing 3 August we will be changing the frequency of how often PPE requests are processed.
- We will move to a once a week dispatch rather than the daily approach which has been in place since March. From next week, all orders received up till 5.00pm on Tuesday each week will be processed on the Wednesday with dispatch to practices in the following 24-48 hours.
- Please make sure to adjust your order quantities to reflect this change, i.e. increase your order to meet your weekly requirements. (You can place orders as often as needed to assess COVID patients, but PPE will only be distributed once a week.)
- Please continue to use the online order form: <https://www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz/personal-protective-equipment-online-request-form/>.
- We will continue to monitor demand and will adjust processing timeframes as appropriate. For urgent one-off requirements not able to fit into this new timeframe please also email eoc@cprg.org.nz identifying the urgent nature of your request.

Kind regards,

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