

Proactive GP engagement reaching the vaccine-fatigued



April 2022

7 day rolling average COVID-19 cases in Victoria > 12,000

Winter is coming - another wave could compound other respiratory illnesses, disproportionately impacting at-risk populations and overwhelming the health system.



The public are tired of hearing about COVID-19.

State-run vaccination centres are underutilised, booster rates are lagging.

Antiviral medications are now available, but timing is crucial.



April - July 2022

North Western Melbourne PHN offered **funding to support general practices** to proactively engage their existing patient base:

- to promote uptake of COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations, and
- initiate early assessment and treatment for COVID-19.



A proactive approach



Each participating practice agreed to:

- Identify vulnerable patients, those at risk of poor outcomes if they contracted COVID-19, via database searches.
- Contact a minimum of 150 individuals, in this risk group, by phone.
- Conduct phone screening and organise follow-up appointments for people who required a COVID-19 or influenza vaccination, or a GP consultation to assess and plan for early antiviral prescription.
- Develop winter treatment plans for consenting individuals.



July - Oct 2022

97 practices participated in the activity.

Together they found, contacted, followed up and helped thousands of people stay well over winter.

- 75,196 at-risk patients were identified from database searches.
- 14,711 SMS were messages sent.
- 20,079 phone calls were made.
- **7,545 COVID-19 and 4,910 influenza vaccines were administered.**
- 4,573 winter preparedness plans were completed.

Success - by design and action

Primary care practitioners were key to the prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

Supporting general practices with small grants to increase their capacity enabled them to actively reach at-risk patients. This strategy reenergised the providers, reengaged patients to practices, and reduced health risks to those most vulnerable.

- Practices have the expertise and structures in place.
- Patients appreciated the contact and the information.
- Patients were more likely to take up vaccination from a known trusted health provider.

For more information

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