

General practice pandemic plan checklist: L3-4 public health alert levels

Refer to the COVID-19 alert levels (<https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/tables/COVID->)

Purpose: identify, develop and implement business continuity steps for general practices during L3 and L4 alert levels.

Shift to virtual health service delivery

Review existing bookings

Amend templates to accommodate your virtual consult plan.

Identify future planned care consultations, reschedule to virtual consultation if appropriate.

Telephone system (reception)

Review automated phone messages – suggest redirection to swabbing clinic time /CBAC testing facility or local designated swabbing general practice site.

Indicate your practice arrangement for “Phone first” triage / consultation.

Patient communications

Inform patients regarding the change in approach to care – use portal, text, phone message, website, Facebook, and door poster.

Patient portal

Offer opportunity to migrate patients to the portal using ‘known to me’ function in PMS.

Workforce

Offer clinical staff older than 70 years, those with pre-existing health conditions, or with family members who have underlying health concerns a role on the virtual health team or home-based admin role for non-clinical staff.

Identify fully vaccinated staff, ensure FIT tested for N95 masks, review PPE donning / doffing – ensure equipment and technique reminders are easily accessible

Consider cohorting staff rosters to give protection and time off – especially when running on skeleton staff.

Identify a virtual health service team including clinical and admin:

- ensure all team members have remote access
- administrative team member to monitor incoming communications, resources (PHO, MOH, GPNZ etc.) and appointment scheduling support
- telephone triage (GP, nurse practitioner, clinical pharmacist or nurse) for non-booked consultations
- telephone planned care (booked) consultations / video if valuable
- identify local practices or practices to partner with to offer shared clinical services (GP triage, immunizations, etc)
- if a single GP provider or small GP team – consider implementing practice collaboration for sharing of clinical / admin resources.

Technology

Implement e-prescription if not already done so.

Use <https://www.telehealth.org.nz/covid-19/> as a source for resources for getting set up.

Ensure up-to-date virtual consult technology is installed through your PMS provider where possible (www.doxy.me is a useful platform to get started.)

See <https://www.healthcarehome.org.nz/hch-moc-overview> for more resources.

Talk to your practice development facilitator about support Pinnacle can offer.

Evolve medical (<https://evolvemed.co.nz/>) is a recommended local support and consultation service.

COVID-19 Countdown plan.

Revised August 2021

In-person consultations/referral pathways activated

- Identify essential services to be provided in person (notably immunisations, cancer screening, palliative care etc).
- Identify a staff member to monitor the stock levels of Personal Protective Equipment and order via agreed process.
- Confirm staff rosters for swabbing services (inhouse / swabbing center / CBAC).
- Confirm staff rosters for Covid vaccination services (inhouse/ community centre).
- Identify at risk or highly vulnerable patients and develop team process for remotely monitoring, keeping well at home or in aged-care facility if practical. (See COVID-19 monitoring at home advice)
- Develop flu vax process keeping well / unwell patients apart, and prioritise groups to be vaccinated.
- Review Red/ Green zoning areas / process in the practice to ensure separation of sick and well patients in long term.

Staff communication

Instigate a morning huddle if not already in place (contact your practice support person for advice).

Ensure usual communication channels can be accessed by staff working from home – consider WhatsApp/Microsoft Teams/Closed Facebook group.

Remember culture is everything, keep it kind and respectful to each other.

Practice closures

If you have to close the practice due to confirmed case

- Follow the instructions of the Medical Officer of Health
- Inform the PHO Medical Director (phone 027 4750488 and email drjo@pinnacle.health.nz) as soon as you know this to be a necessary step.
- Instigate your business continuity plan (c.f. Foundation Standards).

To include:

- inform staff of pending closure and process to follow
- inform patients of impending closure
- notify neighbouring practices / services of impending closure and agree process for practice patients during closure period
- continue to provide virtual services wherever possible
- arrange thorough cleaning of practice
- advise regarding potential length of closure and re-opening protocol.

If you have to close the practice due to workforce issues

- Inform the PHO Medical Director (phone 027 4750488 and email drjo@pinnacle.health.nz) as soon as you think this may be necessary.
- Inform staff of pending closure and process to follow.
- Inform patients of impending closure.
- Notify neighbouring practices / services of impending closure and agree process for practice patients during closure period.
- Continue to provide virtual services wherever possible.