

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TOOLKIT FOR GENERAL PRACTICE

# DISASTER PREPARE

Business continuity  
MODULE

Version 1

December 2021



## DISASTER PREPARE – INFECTION CONTROL/SAFE ENVIRONMENT

### The Quality Improvement (QI) toolkit

This QI toolkit is made up of modules that are **designed to support your practice to make easy, measurable and sustainable improvements to provide best practice care for your patients.** The toolkit will help your practice complete QI activities using the Model For Improvement (MFI).

Throughout the modules you will be guided to explore your data to understand more about your patient population and the pathways of care being provided in your practice. Reflections from the module activities and the related data will inform improvement ideas for you to action using the MFI.

The MFI uses the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle, a tried and tested approach to achieving successful change. It offers the following benefits:

- A simple approach that anyone can apply.
- Reduces risk by starting small.
- It can be used to help plan, develop and implement change that is highly effective.

The MFI helps you break down your change implementation into manageable pieces, which are then tested to ensure that the change results in measurable improvements, and that minimal effort is wasted. There is an increasing the uptake of telehealth example using the MFI at the end of this module.

If you would like additional support in relation to quality improvement in your practice please contact Brisbane South PHN on [support@bsphn.org.au](mailto:support@bsphn.org.au).

Due to constant developments in research and health guidelines, the information in this document will need to be updated regularly. Please

[contact](#) Brisbane South PHN if you have any feedback regarding the content of this document.



This icon indicates that the information relates to the ten Practice Incentive Program Quality Improvement (PIP QI) measures.

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*Toolkit aim - to review your practice business systems to ensure continuity of the practice is maintained during the pandemic.*

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### Key questions to consider



Who are the key people in the practice to implement and monitor telehealth appointments?



Who are the key people to manage practice team members?



Who has the responsibility to ensure the practice remains financially viable?

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## How to use this toolkit

There are checklists included below that will guide you and your practice.

- Use this toolkit to guide you along the journey.
- Set yourselves timelines to achieve your goals.
- Consider potential internal or external factors that could impact the activity and factor these into your planning e.g. accreditation preparation, staff leave (planned or unplanned), global pandemic, influenza vaccination season.
- Review your progress regularly.
- If you find your process is not working and you are not seeing improvements, then review your process and start again.

## For more support



[support@bsphn.org.au](mailto:support@bsphn.org.au)



1300 467 265

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business continuity is an organisation's ability to maintain essential functions during and after a disaster has occurred. Business continuity planning establishes risk management processes and procedures that aim to prevent interruptions to mission-critical services, and reestablish full function to the organisation as quickly and smoothly as possible.

### Activity 1.1 –Telehealth

As the healthcare sector deals with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, general practices have rapidly changed and adapted to a new model of care delivery and access to ensure the continuing safety of their practice teams, patients and the broader community. Telehealth consultations provide patients with a consultation through video or telephone instead of face to face. More information is available from [Digital Health Agency](#).



*The aim of this activity is to review the use of telehealth in your practice.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
<p>Have you held a practice meeting to discuss?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of appointments will be offered via telehealth?</li> <li>• Who will be conducting appointments via telehealth?</li> <li>• Will they be working from home or the practice?</li> <li>• Discussed options with IT provider.</li> <li>• Consider any hardware and software that is required.</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RACGP’s resource, <a href="#">Implementation guidelines for video consultations in general practice</a>,</li> <li>• Medical Board of Australia’s <a href="#">Guidelines for technology based patient consultations</a></li> <li>• RACGP – guide to <a href="#">telehealth</a></li> <li>• RACGP – telehealth <a href="#">flowcharts</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Do all GPs have access to a camera on their computer?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Identify any GPs without a camera and discuss options for installing cameras.</p>
<p>Have you completed the privacy checklist for telehealth services?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Refer to privacy checklist for telehealth service <a href="#">factsheet</a>.</p>
<p>Do all providers have adequate internet? (you can check this on <a href="#">speedtest</a>).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Ask all provider to check internet speed on home and work computer and report back to the practice.</p>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Can all team members working off site access the practice software? Do they need VPN settings? Have you discussed this with the IT provider?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Contact IT provider to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options for accessing practice software and database remotely</li> <li>• Any software or hardware that would be required</li> <li>• Any security/data issues.</li> </ul> Discuss options with practice decision makers and develop policy and procedures that will work for your practice.
Have all team members participated in training on conducting appointments via telehealth?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthdirect – <a href="#">video calls</a></li> <li>• MBS telehealth <a href="#">fact sheet</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">ADHA - Telehealth   Australian Digital Health Agency</a>.</li> </ul>
Have you conducted “mock” appointments for each provider?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Consider arranging a “mock” appointment with a family member or a practice team member who is off-site.
Do all providers have a Translating and Interpreter Services (TIS) code to be able to provide consultations to patients who speak a different language to the provider?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Contact <a href="#">TIS</a> to obtain codes. Consider sharing codes with receptionist who may assist with co-ordinating appointments.
Do all team members know who to conduct telehealth appointments using an interpreter?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to <a href="#">training</a> .
Have you updated website and practice communication methods to ensure patients are aware of telehealth option?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Outline your methods of communication:  Are there any changes to your communication methods you would like to make? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Description	Status	Action to be taken
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Consider all your current patient communication methods and insert information about availability of telehealth.</p> <p>Consider if there are different ways you could communicate with patients into the future.</p>
<p>If you have an online booking system, have you included telehealth with instructions on how this works?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Update online booking system with details of telehealth.</p> <p>Who has the responsibility to complete this?</p> <p>When will this be completed?</p>
<p>Have you identified a system to make sure when the GP is conducting an appointment via telehealth they identify they are speaking to the patient?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>What are your identifiers?</p> <hr/> <p>Identify what will be the 3 patient identifiers to ensure the GP is speaking directly with the patient.</p> <p>How will this be communicated to the practice team?</p>
<p>Do you have a system to provide patients with scripts, requests, referrals, medical certificates?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Identify a system that patients will still be able to collect medical certificates and other paperwork relating to their appointment.</p> <p>How will this be communicated to the practice team?</p>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Do you have a system of who to contact in the practice if your telehealth system is not working?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Delegate responsibility for telehealth troubleshooting to team member/s. It is suggested to delegate roles across multiple people to manage workloads.
If the GP requires a patient to email them a photo or forms to assist with managing the patient, how will this happen? Do you have a dedicated email address for this information to be sent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Consider creating a separate email address so the GP does not have to provide their individual address. Ideally this would be checked by administration staff and forms uploaded to the holding file on the practice clinical software.
Do you know where to access MBS telehealth item numbers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to <a href="#">MBS telehealth</a> information.
 <p>After reviewing your practice's use of telehealth, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

### Activity 1.2 – Electronic prescribing/Pathology e-requests

Electronic prescriptions are part of the broader digital health and medicines safety framework. They enable the prescribing, dispensing and claiming of medicines, without the need for a paper prescription. Patients can still choose which pharmacy they attend to fill their prescription.

General practices can now participate in e-requesting of pathology tests if they refer patients to labs with the necessary software. If labs do not currently offer e-requests, GPs and practice staff can now request the functionality be turned on.<sup>1</sup>



*The aim of this activity is to review your practice's preparation and use of electronic prescribing and pathology e-requests.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Is the practice and all GPs setup for electronic prescribing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADHA – <a href="#">electronic prescribing</a></li> <li>SpotOnHealth HealthPathways – <a href="#">electronic prescribing</a></li> <li>COVID-19 National Health Plan – prescriptions via</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/clinical/electronic-pathology-requests-on-the-rise>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
		<p>telehealth – a <a href="#">guide for prescribers</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RACGP – Electronic Prescribing – <a href="#">Information for patients</a>.</li> </ul>
Do all GPs know how to use electronic prescribing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to training on <a href="#">electronic prescribing</a> from ADHA.
Has the practice been set up for e-requesting if required by the usual pathology provider?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information from My Health Record – <a href="#">digital requests</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Support your patients with Eorders</a> – Sullivan Nicolaides</li> <li>• <a href="#">Online pathology requests</a> - QML.</li> </ul>
Are all relevant team members setup to prescribed scheduled medications with QScript?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to more information from <a href="#">QScript</a> .
 <p>After reviewing your practice’s electronic prescribing and pathology e-requesting, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

### Activity 1.3 – Technology and phone management

 The overall purpose of technology in general practice is to improve information management: this can enhance efficiency of practice processes and systems and increase your practice’s eHealth capabilities. Both of these improvements can lead to better patient outcomes. No two practices will have exactly the same technology needs, just as no two practices have exactly the same processes, workflows, team capabilities and future direction. Therefore, when considering your practice’s technology needs, it is important to understand your current information management and consider what capabilities you would like to develop.<sup>2</sup>

*The aim of this activity is to review your practice’s use of technology in your general practice and to consider any changes you may need to consider if effected by a natural disaster or pandemic.*

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/Running%20a%20practice/Practice%20resources/Management%20to%20olkit/Technology-in-general-practice.pdf>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
<p>Is your practice setup to allow practice team members to work remotely if required by a natural disaster or pandemic?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Outline your system:</p> <p>Has this system been communicated to the practice team?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Discuss available options with your IT provider. Consider if you will need new hardware &amp;/or software.</p>
<p>Do all team members have the required hardware if they are required to work remotely?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Review RACGP general practice management <a href="#">toolkit</a>.</p> <p>Consider hardware requirements including: laptop/PC, camera for GPs etc.</p> <p>Review current available hardware and identify how to acquire this.</p>
<p>Have you considered if your IT support company is unavailable due to natural disaster or pandemic?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Outline how you would manage if the IT support company was not available. Who are the key practice team members responsible for IT system? Do you have written information from your IT company to support you?</p>
<p>Have you considered any maintenance on the server with your practice data that would need to be maintained?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Discuss with IT support company and develop a checklist of minimal requirements for maintaining the server.</p>
<p>Have you considered any risk of data breaches, privacy and confidentiality?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>How will you manage any risk of data breaches, privacy and confidentiality?</p> <p>Refer to RACGP computer security <a href="#">guidelines</a> risk assessment.</p>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
If your practice was required to work remotely due to a natural disaster or pandemic, have you considered how you would perform backups of your data?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Refer to RACGP computer security <a href="#">guidelines</a> information backup – section 7.</p> <p>Discuss backup options with your IT provider.</p> <p>Who has the responsibility to identify this?</p>
Does the practice have a mobile phone to divert to if the main telephone is not working? Is the charger stored with the phone?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Review mobile phone options and system for implementing as required.</p>
Do you know how to divert the phone to a mobile if required? Who has responsibility to perform this task?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Contact your telecommunication company to obtain instructions for your telephone system. Identify practice procedure to implement this if required, including delegation of responsibilities.</p> <p>How will you communicate this to the relevant practice team members?</p>
If practice team members are required to use their personal mobile phones to call patients, have they set their phones to show as private number so they are not disclosing their number to patients?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Suggest all team members change their phone settings to show as private caller.</p> <p>To make private caller on single calls, you can dial #31# before dialling the number (ask all team members to try it).</p>
Do you have instructions available on how to update the answering machine and any on-hold messaging? Is this available to relevant practice staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Create a step-by-step instruction guide on how to update answering machine message, any on-hold messaging. Include key contact people. Provide training to relevant team members.</p>
If the practice is working remotely due to a natural disaster or pandemic, will you continue to meet your practice’s requirements for uploading shared health summaries?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Outline how you will ensure uploads are maintained:</p>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Identify the minimum number of uploads that are required for your practice.</p> <p>Delegate responsibility to practice team members to complete uploads.</p> <p>Set an ongoing task reminder to check shared health summary uploads. Refer to <a href="#">instructions</a> from CAT4.</p>
Do you have a completed an up to date computer and information security template?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to: computer and security <a href="#">templates</a> from RACGP.
 <p>After reviewing your practice’s technology and phone management, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

### Activity 1.4 – Appointment management

Maximising the effectiveness of your appointment system in general practice has the potential to connect patients and clinicians for timely care and create a sustainable working environment.



*The aim of this activity is to review the appointment management procedures in your practice.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Does your practice currently have online appointment system to allow patients to directly book their appointments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to online appointment systems <a href="#">factsheet</a> from RACGP and discuss if this option would be beneficial for your practice.
Do you have a plan if multiple team members are off work due to sickness or isolation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Do you have part-time/casual staff, who can work more hours?</p> <p>Consider employing a <a href="#">trainee</a>.</p> <p>Consider using students (medical, pharmacy, nursing) to assist with tasks in the practice.</p> <p>Consider tasks required and what could be delayed.</p>



Description	Status	Action to be taken
<p>If the practice team has to isolate, or not be able to provide face-to-face consultations (due to natural disaster or pandemic), do you have a system to manage patients who require face-to-face treatment (e.g. Prolia injections, contraception injections, wound care etc.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Arrange a meeting with key practice members to discuss how your practice would manage this situation. Document any procedure agreed upon.</p> <p>Communicate procedure to practice team.</p>
 <p>After reviewing your practice’s appointment management system, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

### Activity 1.5 –Patient billing

In Australia, general practices essentially operate as private businesses. Payment for services involves an agreement between the GP and patient on a fee-for-service basis.



*The aim of this activity is to review your practice’s billing procedures and identify if any changes would need to be made if the practice was effected by a natural disaster or pandemic.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
<p>Do you know the billing process for providing telehealth appointments?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Outline what is the practices telehealth billing processes including bulk billing and private fees.</p> <p>How do you communicate this to patients?</p> <p>How do you communicate this to the practice team?</p>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Review current billing structures. Identify if you would continue the same structures. How would you communicate to the patients and practice team?
Do you have a system to communicate any associated fees relating to patients prior to their appointment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Outline methods of communication:  Are there other ways to communicate to patients if they are not attending the practice?
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	How do you meet RACGP accreditation <a href="#">standard</a> criterion C1.5 – costs associated with care initiated by the practice.  Are there other ways to communicate to patients if they are not attending the practice?
If MBS were to cease telehealth item numbers, would you still offer this service as a private appointment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> No, continue with activity.	Who would be offered these appointments?  Would all GPs in the practice provide this? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  How would this service be communicated to patients?

Description	Status	Action to be taken
<p>Do all practice team members understand the MBS items available under telehealth?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SpotOnHealth HealthPathways – <a href="#">MBS billing &amp; guide to MBS items</a></li> <li>MBS telehealth <a href="#">information</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have a system of obtaining fees from a patient if a GP provides a telehealth appointment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b></p>	<p>Outline your system:</p> <p>Are there any changes you would like to make to your system?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Outline any changes:</p> <hr/> <p>Develop a system for obtaining fees. Will the receptionist contact the patient after the appointment to arrange payment? What if a patient wants to transfer to the practice bank account? Will you submit account to Medicare for patient refund?</p> <p>Document the system and communicate to practice team members and patients.</p>
<p> After reviewing your practice’s billing procedures, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.</p>	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

## Activity 1.6 – Practice communications

Effective communication is essential to providing good healthcare and is pivotal to ensuring patients receive safe care. The general practice team should focus on developing and maintaining robust systems for sharing information.



*The aim of this activity is to review your practice’s communication methods, if some or all team members are working remotely.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Do you have a system identified to communicate as a team, if some or all of your practice team members are working remotely?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Outline your system:  How will you monitor if the system is working well?
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Consider how your practice team members currently communicate with each other. Do you have an internal message system? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Do all team members have their own email address? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Can systems you currently use, be used remotely? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will you be able to hold the same team meetings remotely that you currently hold face-to-face?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Review all meetings currently held. Consider key practice team members. Can meetings continue on an online platform? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Can you future book meetings in advance to ensure availability of key people? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a system in place to ensure all messages, emails, etc. are actioned?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Do you have grouped email? (e.g. all receptionists receive the reception@email, all nurses receive the nurse@email). Consider establishing your system to ensure all receptionist can see when an email has been addressed. You could also create a completed folder, in each

Description	Status	Action to be taken
		inbox to move message to, once actioned).  Ensure your system is documented in the policy & procedure manual.
Does your communication plan include how you will communicate with patients? (if they are using telehealth platform, they will not be attending the practice, therefore, consider alternative methods).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Consider various platforms including: website, Facebook, Twitter, SMS messages etc.
 After reviewing your practice's communication procedures, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.  Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.

### Activity 1.7 – Human resources (HR)/staffing

Medical practices are complex small business enterprises. To be successful as a business, good people management skills are required.<sup>3</sup> High performing practice teams require clear roles and responsibilities, good culture and engaged leadership in order to coordinate effectively to deliver quality services.

While looking after the mental health and wellbeing of our healthcare workers has always been important, the pandemic has made this an immediate priority for our health sector. Never has it been more important to care for your own mental health and wellbeing and for that of your employees, colleagues, family members or loved ones.



*The aim of this activity is to review your practice's team to ensure systems are in place to management individuals wellbeing and adequate staffing requirements.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Do you have a system in place to ensure practice team members are being looked after?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Outline your system:          Is there a process for team members to communicate to management?  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-management/business-operations/general-practice-management-toolkit/managing-people>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>How are you going to communicate this to the practice team?</p> <hr/> <p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SpotOnHealth HealthPathways – <a href="#">mental health support for clinicians</a></li> <li>• Brisbane South PHN – <a href="#">mental health and wellbeing through COVID-19</a></li> <li>• Fairwork – <a href="#">flexible working arrangements</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have a system to check in on all staff on a regular basis?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Refer to information from <a href="#">Safe Work Australia</a>.</p> <p>Consider how you are going to check in on staff regularly. You may wish to create anonymous online survey, have a buddy system to check in on each other and report back.</p>
<p>Do you have groups setup within your practice team that work in isolation from each other? This assists with close contact management, just in case workforces need to isolate.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Discuss with the key people in the practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you split teams up to assist with isolation? How you could you do this?</li> <li>• Can you adjust GPs shifts to limit the number of patients coming into the practice?</li> <li>• Are there telehealth appointments practice nurses can complete from home? (e.g. GPMP, health assessments etc).</li> <li>• Can you have a morning team and an afternoon team?</li> </ul> <p>Consider how your practice might be able to arrange split teams and develop a system that works for your practice.</p>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Have you got a plan if multiple team members are off work due to sickness or isolation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Do you have part-time/casual staff, who can work more hours?</p> <p>Consider employing a <a href="#">trainee</a>.</p> <p>Consider using students (medical, pharmacy, nursing) to assist with tasks in the practice.</p> <p>Consider tasks required and what could be delayed.</p>
Do you have team members with more than 4 weeks leave owing to them? Do you have a plan to cover long term absences?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Consider if this scenario is relevant to your practice and how you could manage this.</p> <p>If employees have large amounts of annual leave, you may <a href="#">direct them to take excess annual leave</a>.</p>
Can you outsource any of the tasks? E.g. Payroll, chronic disease management of patients, organising recall & reminders, scanning etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>see action to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, continue with activity.	<p>Outline what you could outsource:</p> <p>Contact <a href="#">AAPM</a> or <a href="#">APNA</a>.</p>
Do you know if a team member receives a +ve COVID-19 test as a result of direct contact at work, how you would manage this?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Review <a href="#">FAQ</a> from Work Safe Qld.</p>
Do all your HR systems and processes link to QI activities and accreditation requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Review systems to ensure they are documented in the policy and procedure manual. If you make changes to your systems, consider documenting these in a PDSA for evidence of participation for PIP QI.</p>
 <p>After reviewing your practice's human resource management, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

## Activity 1.8 – Maintaining practice viability/financial management

With the introduction of telehealth and the attendance of patients at medical practices due to COVID-19, practices may have noticed a change to practice income and expenses. It is important to review the business financials to ensure sustainability.



*The aim of this activity is to review your practice’s systems for managing financials to ensure practice viability.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Do you know how much it costs to keep the practice open on a daily basis?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	To estimate figure: review expenses for a 12-month period divide by number of days open during this timeframe).  Has this figure changed from previous years? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you know the average fees earned per day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	To estimate figure: identify income earned for the practice for a 12-month period divide by number of days open during this timeframe.  Has this figure changed from previous years? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a system to determine your practice fees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to information from RACGP on <a href="#">determining your practice fees.</a>
Do you know where the biggest source of income comes into the practice from?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Review practice fees earned reports from previous months/years to identify source of income. You may wish to review reports by individual providers.
Have you spoken to individual GPs to discuss their recent billings? Have they noticed any changes in their fees earned?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Discuss with individual GPs if they have noticed any changes in their billings.
Do you have a system to monitor if the practice is maintaining financial viability? Who has the responsibility to monitor this?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity.  <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RACGP – sustaining your business during challenging times <a href="#">webinar.</a></li> <li>• Hotdoc webinar – <a href="#">the essential KPIs you should be tracking.</a></li> </ul>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Do you set key performance indicators within the practice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <a href="#">essential</a> KPI's you should be tracking in your medical practice.</li> <li>Top 5 KPIs for <a href="#">nurses</a> in general practice.</li> </ul>
Do you know how you can increase fees earned using patient MBS item numbers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to Brisbane South PHN – MBS QI <a href="#">toolkit</a> .
Do you know where to access MBS telehealth item numbers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to <a href="#">MBS telehealth</a> information.
 After reviewing your practice's financial management procedures, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.  Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.

### Activity 1.9 – Maintaining practice accreditation

It is important for practices to continue to maintain accreditation [standards](#) as provided by the Royal Australian College of General Practice. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care have stated If your general practice is in a location where there is a public health order in place that prevents a scheduled on-site assessment to the standards, the Commission will consider a short extension to allow organisations to be assessed once restrictions are lifted.<sup>4</sup>

Please note: it is important for you to maintain communication with your accreditation body as they can advise on a case by case basis.



*The aim of this activity is to review your practice's ongoing commitment to meeting accreditation standards.*

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Do you know when your next accreditation visit is due?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to previous accreditation certificate for expiry date.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/primary-health-care/national-general-practice-accreditation-scheme>

Description	Status	Action to be taken
Have you communicated with your accreditation agency to discuss if there are any changes/updates as a result of COVID-19?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Contact your practice’s accreditation <a href="#">agency</a> .
Is there a person/people in the practice responsible for keeping the policy & procedure manual up to date?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	<p>Delegate responsibility to a team member/s.</p> <p>Ensure any updates to policy &amp; procedures are communicated to the practice team.</p>
Do you know where to access accreditation training/workshops?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, continue with activity. <input type="checkbox"/> No, <b>see action to be taken.</b>	Refer to Brisbane South PHN’s <a href="#">education calendar</a> . <i>(Please check the calendar on a regular basis, for any new events).</i>
 <p>After reviewing your practice’s financial management procedures, are there any changes with the management of your patients you would like to implement over the next 12 months?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <b>set goals and outline in actions to be taken.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No, you have completed this activity.	<p>Complete the <a href="#">MFI template</a> for your practice.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">example MFI</a> at the end of this document.</p>

## Links to other prepare QI toolkits

This toolkit, is part of a suite of disaster prepare QI toolkits. Identify if your practice would like to complete another one of the following topics:

Business planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Toolkit aim - to review your systems to ensure your practice has adequate planning to continue working during a natural disaster or pandemic.</i></li> </ul>
Infection control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Toolkit aim - to review your practice systems to ensure infection control and safe work environments are maintained during the pandemic.</i></li> </ul>
Patient management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Toolkit aim - to review your practice systems to ensure patients are provided with the right care at the right time during the pandemic to support a person-centred approach to their care.</i></li> </ul>

Brisbane South PHN have a full [suite of toolkits](#) are available in a variety of topics including: chronic conditions, mental health, prevention, patient populations and quality records and business.

## Example PDSA for business continuity

See below for suggested goals related to business continuity you may wish to achieve within your practice:

Goal	How you may achieve your goal
Ensure all providers are registered with QScript.	Refer to QScript <a href="#">registration</a> .
Ensure practice systems adhere to computer and information security guidelines as outlined by RACGP.	Refer to compliance <a href="#">checklist</a> for computer and information security.
Ensure fees generated at the practice, is sufficient to maintain viability.	Refer to MBS item QI <a href="#">toolkit</a> to identify item numbers the practice can complete.

# Model for Improvement diagram



Source: <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/ScienceofImprovementTestingChanges.aspx>

## MFI and PDSA template EXAMPLE

### Step 1: The thinking part - The 3 fundamental questions

<b>Practice name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Team members:</b>	
<b>Q1. What are we trying to accomplish? (Goal)</b>	
By answering this question, you will develop your GOAL for improvement. Record this as a S.M.A.R.T. goal ( <b>S</b> pecific, <b>M</b> easurable, <b>A</b> chievable, <b>R</b> elevant, <b>T</b> ime bound).	
Our goal is to: - Support the adoption of telehealth video consultations in the 'business as usual' workflow. This is a good start, but how will you measure whether you have achieved this goal? The team will be more likely to embrace change if the goal is more specific and has a time limit. So, for this example, a better goal statement would be: <i>Our S.M.A.R.T goal is to:</i> Increase the percentage of telehealth consultations that are performed via video compared to telephone by 10% by 3 July.	
<b>Q2. How will I know that a change is an improvement? (Measure)</b>	
By answering this question, you will determine what you need to MEASURE in order to monitor the achievement of your goal. Include how you will collect your data (e.g. CAT4 reports, patient surveys etc.). Record and track your baseline measurement to allow for later comparison.	
We will identify current MBS item billing for video and telephone consults as the baseline measure. Each week, we will track the MBS item billing for both video and telephone consults. At the end of the project, we will review the change in video versus telephone consultation billing over time. The data will be pulled via <a href="#">CAT4</a> .	
<b>Q3. What changes could we make that will lead to an improvement? (List your IDEAS)</b>	
By answering this question, you will generate a list of IDEAS for possible changes you could implement to assist with achieving your S.M.A.R.T. goal. You will test these ideas using part 2 of this template, the 'Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA)' cycle. Your team could use brainstorming or a driver diagram to develop this list of change ideas.	
IDEA: Contact Brisbane South PHN to assist with Healthdirect video conferencing software adoption	
IDEA: Redesign patient booking workflow	
IDEA: Develop a quick reference guide for staff with information on how to conduct a consult via video platform, the consent process and an explanation for patients	
IDEA: Communicate availability of telehealth video consults to patients via all platforms	
IDEA: Train ALL staff on changes.	
IDEA: Encourage all staff to advise patients of availability of telehealth video consults.	

Note: Each new GOAL (1st Fundamental Question) will require a new MFI plan.

Source: Langley, G., Nolan, K., Nolan, T., Norman, C. & Provost, L. 1996, The Improvement Guide, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, USA.

## MFI and PDSA template

### Step 2: The doing part - Plan, Do, Study, Act

You will have noted your IDEAS for testing when you answered the 3rd fundamental question in step 1. You will use this template to test an idea. Ensure you communicate the details of the plan to the entire practice team.

IDEA	Record the change idea you are testing
Which idea are you going to test? (Refer to Q3, step 1 above)	
Contact Brisbane South PHN to assist with Healthdirect video conferencing software adoption	
PLAN	Record the details of how you will test your change idea
Plan the test, including a plan for collecting data	What exactly do you plan to do? Record who will do what; when they will do it (day, time etc) and for how long (1 week, 2 weeks etc); and where (if applicable); the data to be collected; and predictions about the outcome.
<p>What: Practice Manager to contact Brisbane South PHN to take up Healthdirect video calling software and arrange staff training. Practice to discuss telehealth session learnings at team meeting.</p> <p>When: 8-20 June</p> <p>Prediction: Training for staff would increase confidence in using Healthdirect software and therefore increase the use of video consults.</p> <p>Data to be collected: Number of practice staff attending training session. Practice manager will monitor each week the percentage of telehealth consults that are performed by video compared to telephone. Graphs for staff will be placed in the lunch room so the team can see how they are progressing. 3rd July; the rate of video compared to telephone consultation will be compared to the baseline.</p>	
DO	Run the test, then record your actions, observations and data
Run the test on a small scale	What did you do? Were there any deviations from the original plan? Record exactly what you did, the data collected and any observations. Include any unexpected consequences (positive or negative).
<p>Completed 9 June - Practice manager contacted Brisbane South PHN and arranged Healthdirect training and installation. Booked install for 12 June and training session for 17 June. Advised all staff of training session.</p> <p>Completed 12 June - Brisbane South PHN staff set up Healthdirect account for practice and provided software</p> <p>Completed 19 June - Brisbane South PHN staff conducted training for receptionists and 2 GPs. 1 GP was unable to attend session.</p> <p>Completed 20 June - Practice discussed team feedback and learnings from session in team meeting.</p>	

STUDY	Analyse the data and your observations
Analyse the results and compare them to your predictions	Was the plan executed successfully? Did you encounter any problems or difficulties? What worked/didn't work? What did you learn on the way? Compare the data to your predictions. Summarise and reflect on what was learned.
<p>Practice received Healthdirect software and training.</p> <p>Training was conducted successfully for all staff except 1 GP.</p> <p>Feedback at team meeting indicated that practice staff felt more confident using Healthdirect and could see how video consults could be more beneficial than telephone consults. Team expressed a need for clear and 'plain english' communication to patients to promote healthdirect video conferencing.</p>	
ACT	Record what you will do next
Based on what you learned from the test, record what your next actions will be	Will you adopt, adapt or abandon this change idea? Record the details of your option under the relevant heading below. <i>ADOPT: record what you will do next to support making this change business as usual; ADAPT: record your changes and re-test with another PDSA cycle; or ABANDON: record which change idea you will test next and start a new PDSA.</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice manager to train GP who was unable to attend session.</li> <li>If Healthdirect video consultation is successful consider developing a practice a plan for incorporating video consultation into business as usual. The practice will consider which consultations might be appropriate for video consult instead of face to face consultation.</li> <li>Practice to design communication plan to explain video consultation and promote its availability</li> </ol>	

Repeat step 2 to re-test your adapted plan or to test a new change idea

### Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge that some material contained in this Toolkit has been extracted from organisations including the Institute for Healthcare Improvement; the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP); the Australian Government Department of Health; Best Practice; MedicalDirector, CAT4 and Train IT. These organisations retain copyright over their original work and we have abided by licence terms. Referencing of material is provided throughout.

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### Brisbane South PHN, 2022

