

COVID-19 support in primary care

Boosting ACT-wide vaccination rates and reducing COVID-19 transmission risk

CHN

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20
19

COVID-19 Becomes A Global Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Capital Health Network (CHN), ACT's Primary Health Network joined the Primary Care Emergency Working Group with ACT Health, Canberra Health Services, and primary care stakeholders including GPs, the RACGP and Winnunga Nimmityjah in Jan. 2020. CHN mobilised PPE, supported communication and delivered COVID-specific events.

Phase 1A – AstraZeneca vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout started in March 2021 with CHN managing the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine. 74 out of 97 (76.3%) general practices in the ACT administered the AZ COVID-19 vaccine, with CHN delivering PPE to all practices. CHN coordinated staff and resident vaccinations in the 30 ACT Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF).

Phase 1B – Pfizer inclusion

CHN managed the EOI for the Pfizer vaccine in Jan. 2021 and developed a partnership with accounting firm RSM to develop a targeted Business Continuity Program for general practices.

Phase 2A and 2B – more focus on younger population

The supply of Pfizer was scarce and created many challenges across primary care. CHN ensured that doses were redistributed and allocated appropriately to meet demand.

2021 lockdown

12 Aug. marked the first locally acquired COVID-19 case (confirmed Delta variant) since July 2020, sending the ACT into a snap lockdown. Vaccination rates increased in the local population in response to growing cases. CHN organised dose increases to the practices and had made almost 200 PPE deliveries since the Aug. 2021 lockdown.

Booster shots

The Commonwealth Government started the booster rollout in Oct. 2021 which initially targeted the RACFs and disability sector. CHN was heavily involved with the management of the booster shots, excess doses and vaccine dose increases. At 2 Feb. 2022, the booster rate in the ACT for the 18+ population was approximately 50.4%.

Third vaccine becomes available – Moderna

The Department of Health (DoH) introduced another COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna, in Oct. 2021. CHN managed the EOI for Moderna and only a few practices opted to administer Moderna.

Care@Home Program

Canberra Health Services (CHS) developed the new Care@Home program in Aug. 2021 which supported the care of COVID-19 positive patients in collaboration with the patient's usual GP. Patients who are low-mild are referred and managed in primary care, while those who are moderate-high are escalated to hospital. The Care@Home Community Clinical Huddle was established to provide forum for GPs to share information.

COVID-19 Support Programs

Condamine Court and ANU Liversidge Court program

In Sep. 2021, in collaboration with the General Practice Liaison Unit (GPLU), CHN worked with selected practitioners to provide telehealth services for the quarantining vulnerable population at Condamine Court followed by the quarantining vulnerable population at ANU Liversidge Court.

RACF Staff Clinic coordination with Aspen Medical

Major coordination took place between CHN and Aspen to deliver vaccinations to Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) staff. CHN took responsibility of coordinating the RACFs and ensuring readiness for Aspen's Vaccination Clinics.

Vulnerable Persons Vaccination Program

CHN worked with ACT Health and Directions Health Services to support vaccination for people living in social housing and other vulnerable communities. We also worked with Next Practice Deakin to provide vaccination to people who are homebound or without a Medicare card.

First Case: Omicron

3 Dec. marked the first confirmed case of the highly infectious Omicron in the ACT. CHN distributed more PPE to every ACT general practice and emergency PPE bundles were also provided to a few select practices, including pulse oximeters.

Paediatric Pfizer 5-11 year olds

All general practices administering Pfizer for 12 years and older began administering Pfizer to 5-11 year olds in Jan. 2022. CHN supported this transition by communicating with general practice. At 2 Feb. 2022, approximately 70.3% of children aged 5-11 years had received their first dose of Pfizer.

Pharmacy bundles

Department of Health enabled vaccinating pharmacists to access P2/N95 masks and face shields in Jan. 2022. CHN has since delivered to 24 pharmacies and mobilised over 1,800 surgical masks, 3,780 P2 masks, 225 gowns and 360 face shields.

Fourth vaccine available - Novavax

The Commonwealth introduced the fourth COVID-19 vaccine in Jan. 2022. CHN managed the EOI for Novavax in Jan. 2022. To date, only a select few practices have opted-in to administer this vaccine.

Oral anti-viral provisionally approved

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has provisionally approved the first oral anti-viral treatments for COVID-19 in Australia. Lagevrio (molnupiravir) and Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir + ritonavir) are effective for treating those with mild to moderate COVID-19 who have a high risk of progressing to severe disease.

CHN Achievements

- Key player in establishing the Primary Care Emergency Working Group.
- Delivered over 500,000 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to general practices, allied health and pharmacies across ACT.
- Developed and strengthened relationships with general practice and RACF to support the pandemic response.
- Developed the Business Continuity Program in partnership with local accounting firm RSM.
- Delivered over 30 COVID-19 events, in partnership with key stakeholders, to support primary care.
- Developed innovative informative solutions for information consumption (5-Minute Catchup and Let's Talk podcast).

Events 2021

- Workshop for Practice Principals to prepare for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out – **4 March 2021**
- COVID-19 Vaccination Update for GPs: Vaccine safety monitoring – **12 April 2021**
- ACT Health Immunisation Update: COVID-19 vaccine safety – **26 May 2021**
- Primary Care Briefing COVID-19 – **16 Aug. 2021**
- Clinical care arrangements for patients with COVID-19 – **31 Aug. 2021**
- ACT Health Immunisation Update: COVID-19 vaccines – **23 Sep. 2021**
- Public Health Update: Business continuity – **20 Oct. 2021**
- COVID-19 vaccination and dispelling myths – **25 Oct. 2021**
- GP & COVID-19 Care@Home Community Clinical Huddle (Four session, **Jan. and Feb. 2022**)
- Caring for your COVID-19 positive residential age care patient – **13 Jan. 2022**
- Managing COVID-19 exposures and outbreaks in residential aged care facilities – **4 Feb. 2022**
- ACT Health Immunisation Update - Myocarditis and Pericarditis after COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines – **9 Feb. 2022**

Legend



Capital Health Network Initiative



Canberra Health Services Initiative

20
22