Dear **Employers/ School Principals/ Day Care Managers,**

Doctors are unable to provide patients with COVID-19 clearance.

As per government advice and guidelines, resources must be conserved for patients who are both unwell and fit strict testing criteria and this means that **testing for COVID-19 outside of the strict medical criterion cannot and should not be done.**

This is to preserve precious healthcare resources, such as testing kits, laboratory facilities, protective equipment and health care workers.

At this time, doctors are therefore unable to:

* Provide clearance for people who have returned from overseas. These patients need to self-isolate for 14 days. Once 14 days have passed, if the person shows NO symptoms, they are fit to return to work.
* Provide clearance for well people who have had contact with unwell people (specifically, if the unwell person has NOT been formally diagnosed with COVID-19). **Our advice to everyone is to self-isolate if and when they develop any symptoms of a respiratory tract infection**.
* Provide testing for patients with MILD illness symptoms, with no COVID-19 close contacts or travel risk factors. These people are to take ‘sick leave’ as usual for a cold or flu, and are able to return to work once their symptoms have fully resolved.

As an **Employer/ School**, you can do your part to help during this difficult time by:

* Enabling employees/ students to self-isolate for 14 days if they meet the current government criteria (the most up to date criteria will be found on your local state government website)
* Enable any and/or all employees to work from home
* ***Allow employees/students who develop viral illness symptoms to take sick leave as required, without requiring a medical review or clearance from already overstretched clinics***
* Make changes to how your business operates to be flexible for those staff who are high risk, such as immunosuppressed, to decrease their risk of exposure.
* Access all staff to adequate hand washing facilities including alcohol hand gels
* Educate all employees about the need to uphold the following social distancing recommendations
  + Maintain safe distances between employees in the office and during face to face meetings – 1.5m between each person
  + Wash hands regularly between all contacts with surfaces
  + Avoid touching the face (except after hand washing)
  + Cover mouth and nose if you sneeze and cough using the elbow rather than the hand
  + Wipe down all hard surfaces in the workplace with detergent and water at least every 24 hours

I would implore and recommend that you consider the need for requesting Medical Clearance/ Certificates during this time as it leads to well people presenting to GP Practices and stretching our essential health care service.

Other measures that you can assist as per Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC):

* Limit all organised outdoor gatherings to fewer than 500 people
* Limit all organised indoor gatherings to fewer than 100 people
* Limiting non-essential meetings or conferences of critical workforce
* Discourage any non essential domestic travel
* Encouraging all Australians to exercise personal responsibility for social distancing measures
* Initiating measures to protect vulnerable populations.

Kind Regards,

The information set out in this publication is current at the date of first publication and is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular patients or circumstances. Nor is this publication exhaustive of the subject matter. It is no substitute for individual inquiry. Compliance with any recommendations does not guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. The RACGP and its employees and agents have no liability (including for negligence) to any users of the information contained in this publication.