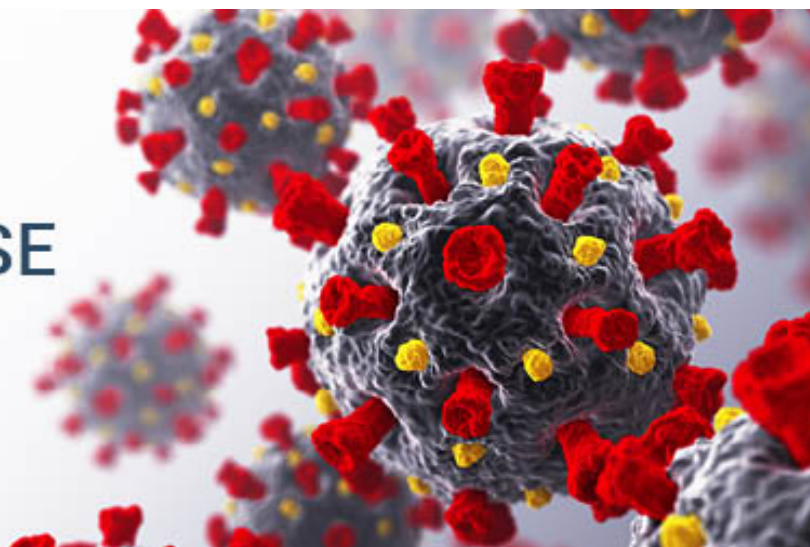


UPDATE

RACP COVID-19 RESPONSE



As at 15 April 2020

Advocacy

- In response to COVID-19, the Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine has drafted guidelines for members on the delivery of medication assisted treatment of opioid dependence. Said guidelines are currently undergoing the approval process.
- The Contact Centre and regional and Aotearoa New Zealand member-facing staff are now logging concerns raised by members, particularly trainees reallocated to COVID-19 clinical duties, regarding access to PPE. As this is being raised by a range of members, the aim of logging this information is to determine the scale of the concern.
- There is anecdotal evidence that members working in private practice, but also public and private hospitals are still struggling to access PPE and have little to no access to training in when and how to use PPE correctly. Those working in tertiary hospitals are using their networks to share information, but there may be a need for the College to take a role in disseminating such information on a jurisdictional basis.
- A [Māori Health Committee statement](#) has been released urging the Aotearoa New Zealand Government to ensure that equity is centred in all COVID-19 decisions, medical unit prioritisation, resource rationing and data collection. The statement supports the work of [Te Rōpū Whakakaupapa Urutā](#), the Independent National Māori Pandemic Group.
- The College continues to advocate for the expansion of telehealth for specialists, with Phase 5 and 6 announcements expected to be made next week.
- The College has provided formal support through a letter to the Minister for Health for the development of the COVIDDA-COVID 19 Digital Asset pilot proposal. The COVIDDA-COVID 19 Digital Asset is an online mental health pilot for frontline health workers. The development of the pilot is an important step to increasing the availability of mental health support and services for frontline health workers during this period of increased health service demand.
- The College, along with other medical colleges and human rights organisations, has released a media statement urging the Government to release people from immigration detention centres in Australia immediately due to the risks associated with COVID-19. President-elect, Professor John Wilson was spokesperson and provided an interview on 14 April 2020 for the TV show, The Project.

Advisory Groups – Education Learning and Assessment

- Based on the recommendations from the Examinations Advisory Group, the College Education Committee have made the decision to postpone the following examinations until 2021. Communications were circulated advising members on 2 April 2020.
 - Divisional Clinical Examination for Paediatrics & Child Health and Adult Medicine in Australia and New Zealand
 - AFRM Fellowship Written Examination (General)
 - AFRM Fellowship Written Examination (Paediatrics)
 - AFRM Fellowship Clinical Examination (General)
 - AFRM Fellowship Clinical Examination (Paediatrics)
 - AFRM Module 1 Written Assessment
 - AFRM Module 2 Clinical Assessment
 - AFPHM Oral Examination.
- The Examinations Advisory Meeting held on 8 April 2020 recommended that AFEOM exams also be postponed to 2021. This will now go to the College Education Committee for approval. If approved, all remaining 2020 College exams, except for the AChSHM Exit Assessment which will be offered via video technology, have now been postponed to 2021.
- On 9 April 2020 members were advised of the interim changes to program requirements due to COVID-19, including measures for those graduating to Fellowship, COVID-19 sick leave including entitlements for those needing to quarantine, new submission deadlines and extensions for requirements that cannot be completed because of COVID-19.
- The College COVID-19 education webpages have been redesigned to support the various changes.

- Now that these major decisions have been agreed, the focus will now turn to developing process for how this will work with individual Training Committees.
- A second meeting was held with all Australian Health Departments to discuss the impacts on their annual recruitment processes. It is noted that some states have been much harder hit by COVID-19 than others, affecting if they will be able to undertake recruitment as normal this year and whether they are allowing term rotations to go ahead. They are also undertaking a national review on whether the start of the 2021 clinical year should be delayed.
- A short pulse survey was released to trainees to capture their main concerns during this time and to get feedback on how the College can best assist them. Over 1,500 responses were received and results are now published on the [College COVID-19 education webpage](#).

Professional Practice

CPD

- The College would ordinarily begin auditing Fellows 2019 CPD records from 1 April 2020. This process will not be undertaken this year. The College has informed the Medical Board of Australia.

Online resources

- Online resources are in development to support members with key issues relating to COVID-19, including resources on telehealth and wellbeing, as well as increased SPDP online courses to replace face-to-face delivery.

Trainees

- All Basic Trainees and AFRM trainees received personalised notice about exams postponement on 13 March and 2 April 2020.
- Aotearoa New Zealand staff have responded to a number of trainee enquiries and are logging all questions and concerns.

Meetings

- The recent webinar on how to undertake telehealth consultations was attended by close to 600 participants. Webinar recordings can be found on the [College COVID-19 webpage](#) > Advice and news > Telehealth.
- A series of webinars to guide Australian members through COVID-19 stimulus packages are being presented on a regional basis with overwhelming interest from members.

RACP Facilities and staff

- Discussions will soon commence on how to manage the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington office, should the Aotearoa New Zealand Government announce on 20 April 2020 that Aotearoa New Zealand will move from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3 after 23 April 2020.

RACP Resources

- [College COVID-19 webpage](#)
- [National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce – evidence-based clinical guidelines](#)