

Australia describes success of dedicated general practice respiratory clinics during COVID-19 pandemic

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In a special report published in *The Annals of Family Medicine*, Australian researchers describe the national rollout of General Practice

Respiratory Clinics (GPRCs) at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, GPRCs were created in communities across Australia to divert individuals with respiratory illness away from mainstream general practice into an environment specifically designed to maximize infection prevention and [control measures](#). This was also done to protect health care providers, patients, and their immediate contacts. Additionally, the clinics provided anonymized [patient data](#) for the Australian Government Department of Health for weekly surveillance reports, as well as for state and Commonwealth public health authorities and the Australian National COVID-19 Disease Surveillance plan.

The report describes the process for choosing GPRC sites. Additionally, it describes a customized respiratory clinic data collection app, which works as a mini-patient record, capturing clinical symptoms, physical exam findings, diagnosis, management and follow-up planning. By September 2020, 150 GPRCs had opened across the country. GPRCs demonstrated the ability for rapid scale-up in response to COVID-19 cases in a specific area and could be integrated with other health and [community services](#).

This is the first time that this type of model has been used in Australia. It recognizes and formalizes the key role of GPs in pandemic response, providing a level of integration the researchers say is long overdue for [primary care](#).

More information: Stephanie Davis et al, Integrating General Practice Into the Australian COVID-19 Response: A Description of the General Practitioner Respiratory Clinic Program in Australia, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2808](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2808)

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