

Winter Workforce Survey 2023 Snapshot



Capital Health Network (CHN) undertook a survey of general practices focused on planning for the upcoming winter season within primary care. **CHN received 82 responses representing 80% of general practices across the ACT.** The following is a summary of the information provided to CHN by general practices across the ACT.

General information



of responding practices reported that they are accepting new patients.



of responding practices are RACGP-accredited, with a further 1.2% in the process of being accredited



of general practice responders consider their practices COVID-safe.

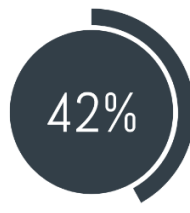


of general practices have strategies in place to ensure access to appointments on the day or within 72 hours if needed.

How are practices managing patients with respiratory symptoms?



of general practices are fully open for in-person appointments



of general practices would review patients in-person following a telehealth review



6% of general practices are only doing telehealth for respiratory symptoms

Primary concerns heading into winter

- Workforce shortages, managing sick leave and staff burnout
- Increased patient demand and inadequate practice capacity
- Managing increased cases of Influenza, COVID and other respiratory disease outbreaks – remaining COVID-safe
- Continuity of care for patients with chronic conditions
- Patient uptake of vaccinations

Workforce summary

There are 103 general practices in the ACT. The following graphs provide information regarding a count of the practice staff, as well as their full time equivalent (FTE), working in general practice in the ACT.

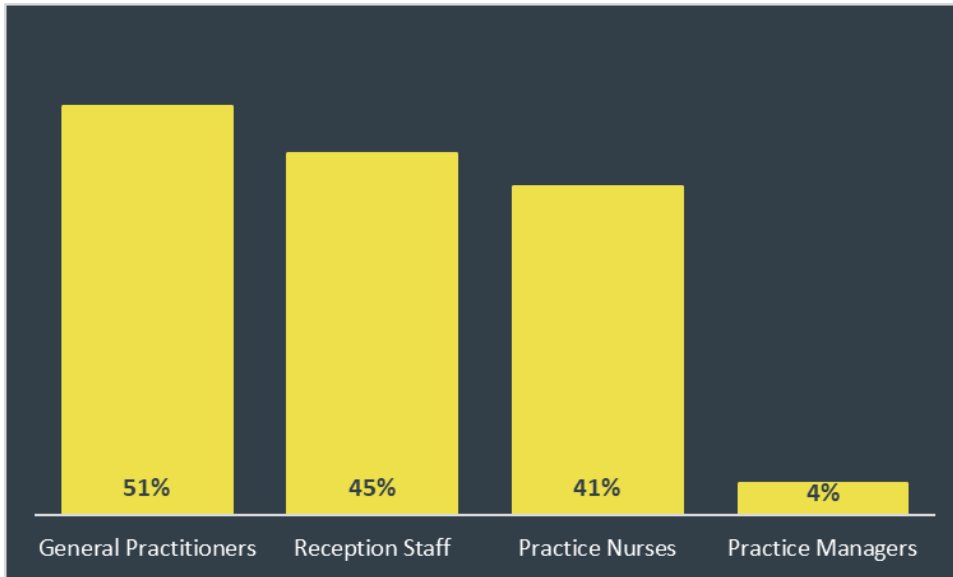


Graph 1. Count of staff in general practices in the ACT



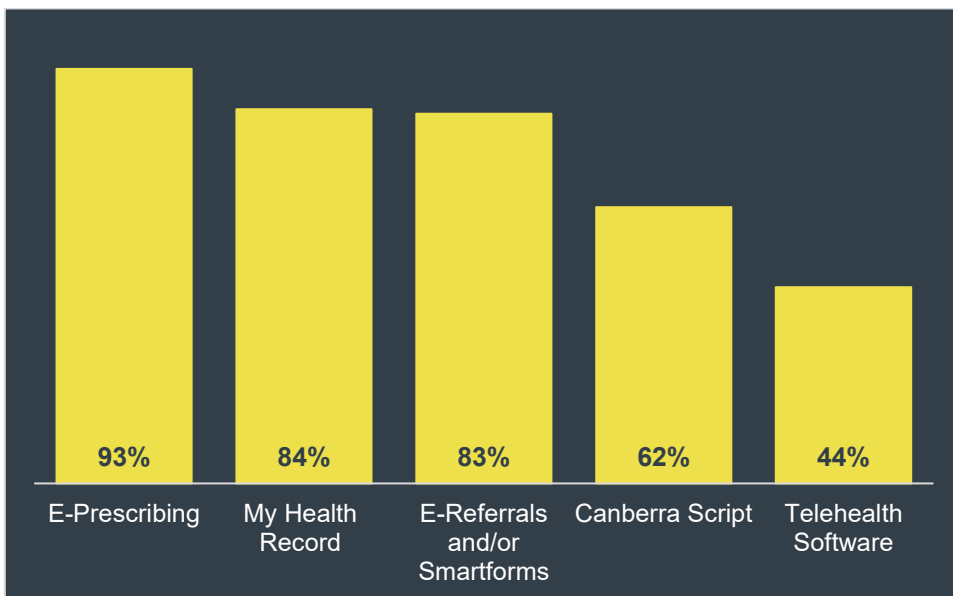
Graph 2. Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of staff in general practices in the ACT

Workforce shortages



Graph 3. Under staffing by role reported by survey responders

Digital Health utilisation



Graph 4. Percentage of general practices utilising digital health programs

Conclusion

The survey aimed to understand general practices in the ACT in preparation for the winter season. Although the majority of the respondents were happy to accept new patients and agreed to receive referrals from Canberra Health Services and Calvary Hospital, shortages in the workforce and increased patient demand remain a concern in the primary care setting.

As we approach the winter period, most practices in the ACT are open to catering to patients with respiratory symptoms in-person or after being assessed over the phone. At the same time, a large portion of practices have a system in place to see patients on the day or within 72 hours upon being triaged by the Practice Nurse or the Receptionist.

Despite most of the respondents considering their practice to be COVID-safe, support and communication will be essential during this period. Therefore, it is important to provide timely and updated information to practices and ensure the availability of health care services to meet the increase in demand. Workforce support and provision of assistance and resources such as personal protective equipment should also be considered a priority in this coming winter season.