

October 2013

Julianne Brettargh
Pandemic Planning Section
Office of Health Protection
Australian Government Department of Health

By email: pandemic.planning@health.gov.au

Dear Julianne Brettargh,

Draft Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza

Thank you for the opportunity for APNA to provide input to the draft Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza.

The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) is the peak body for nurses working in general practice and other primary health care settings across Australia. We provide representation, information and education, and professional support and development for our members.

We are providing this written submission to ensure that the views of primary health care nurses are considered in the evaluation.

Our response relates to the delivery of care by primary health care nurses as part of multidisciplinary teams.

Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza: The document overall is clearly set out with uncomplicated action pathways for each stage. In particular, the proposed fact sheets and YouTube information will be accessible and valuable to nurses working in primary health care.

Suggested revisions are:

- The Plan needs to refer to the entire general practice team, not just general practitioners. Many teams will include practice nurse/s, a practice manager, reception staff and potentially allied health workers. It is important to make reference to the need for workplaces to have a pandemic readiness plan and refer back to Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) pandemic guidelines in such policies.
- The media pathways describe where general practitioners can obtain up to date information, such as through the RACGP, but should also have news links to information hosted or republished on the websites of all relevant professional



associations: APNA, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), CRANApplus, Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP), Australian Association of Practice Managers (AAPM) and pharmacy bodies.

- There needs to be some information higher in the document – rather than appearing for the first time in the supporting documents – regarding the use of antivirals for prophylaxis for health professionals and/or speedy access to antiviral medications for health care workers (and their families), and the length of time they need to be taken for prophylaxis during a prolonged epidemic.

This might include a ‘myth and realities’ type discussion of the usefulness or not of prophylaxis, which was a major point of concern for health workers during the H1N1 pandemic.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I hope this submission is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Julianne Badenoch
President, APNA