



## Department of Health

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HHSD/22/521679

### **Letter from the Acting Chief Health Officer to General Practitioners and Primary Care providers regarding RAT verification requirements for prescription of antiviral medications**

Dear General Practitioners and Primary Care colleagues

I would firstly like to thank you for your continuing efforts in supporting Victoria's COVID-19 response. The work of general practice and primary care colleagues since the early days of the response has been instrumental in our success in addressing the impacts of the pandemic.

Recently, the work undertaken to promote uptake of COVID-19 antiviral agents has been an important focus of the response and one which I am keen to ensure continues. The prescription of early antivirals in the community has already resulted in a significant reduction in hospitalisation and loss of life due to COVID-19 in Victoria's most recent wave over winter.

I am aware of some uncertainties amongst general practitioners regarding positive test requirements for COVID-19 before antiviral medications can be prescribed.

In particular, I note the requirement of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for a positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result or a positive rapid antigen test (RAT) result to be *verified by a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner* has raised questions from primary care providers.

In this context and in relation to RAT results, 'verification by a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner' simply means confirming with the patient that they have had a positive RAT result. The health practitioner does **not** need to sight the positive RAT device.

I again thank you for your efforts in addressing COVID-19 in Victoria.

Yours sincerely

**Prof Benjamin Cowie**  
Acting Chief Health Officer  
08 / 09 / 2022