

# We're virtually essential! How clinical pharmacy can facilitate new virtual models of care

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## BACKGROUND

In February 2020, Sydney Local Health District established the first virtual hospital in Australia. RPA Virtual Hospital offers a suite of hospital-level care to patients in the community. Clinical pharmacists can play a key role in service development to ensure concordance with legislative and facility frameworks.

## OBJECTIVE

To describe key pharmacy undertakings in establishing new virtual clinical models of care.

## ACTIONS

A range of virtual hospital services have been developed to improve community access to health care. Pharmacy involvement in establishing virtual services is outlined below.

## EVALUATION

Establishment of new processes for virtual services must be concordant with National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and local and national governance requirements.

## DISCUSSION

Novel challenges have been encountered when establishing virtual health services. Bespoke solutions have been developed to address these challenges. Pharmacy involvement in development of these services have highlighted pharmacy's range of skills in novel virtual service development.

**64,350**<sup>\*</sup> Patients have received RPA Virtual Hospital care since 2020

### TUBERCULOSIS VIRTUAL DIRECT OBSERVATIONAL THERAPY (vDOT)

- Trialed various medication packaging (Webster Packs, standard discharge packaging, original packaging) that best facilitated nurse-led virtual observations of TB treatment.

**140**<sup>\*</sup>

Patients have received vDOT services since 2020

### QUARANTINED COVID-19 PATIENTS IN HEALTH ACCOMMODATION

- The following processes were developed to facilitate timely supply of medications for quarantined patients:
  - benzodiazepine pre-packs,
  - transport, storage and administration of vaccines,
  - staged-supply of controlled drugs for high-risk patients,
  - Ministerial approval for image-based dispensing and recategorisation of this cohort as inpatients.

**12,689**<sup>^</sup>

Items dispensed for patients in quarantine health accommodation

**9,290**<sup>^</sup>

Patients received medications while in quarantine health accommodation

### DECENTRALISED VIRTUAL CLINICAL TRIALS

- Developed medication take-home packs for community administration of trial agents,
- Provision of additional pharmacist training on processes of virtual clinical trials.

### ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP

- An antimicrobial stewardship program is in development for the virtual hospital. Key actions include:
  - antimicrobial usage audits,
  - draft antimicrobial formularies based on clinical needs of virtual services,
  - policy development.

### VIRTUAL PHARMACY WORKFLOWS

- Virtual models of care have provided clinical pharmacists opportunities to undertake virtual medication reviews.
- Virtual medication reviews can be completed via digital video conferencing platforms.

\* as of 17 November 2022

^ as of 06 September 2022 per Pharmalytix