



Healthy practices, healthy patients

How General Practitioners (GP) are responding to sustain Australia's primary care sector



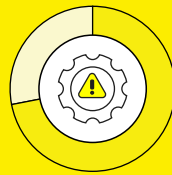
Our new CommBank GP Insights Report marks a turning point for the practice and patient experience. The recovery in patient numbers following the pandemic has stepped up just as the cost and capacity to deliver care have come under pressure. We examine how practices are responding to adapt, grow, and provide sustainable care to patients.

Practices rising to meet patient demand



47%

say patient numbers have increased in the past year, and 90% expect the same or higher in the year ahead.



72%

say staff shortages constrain capacity and growth, with only one in four expecting to increase GP numbers this year.

Fewer Australians now report being in excellent or very good health, supporting the prospect of elevated demand for general practice services remaining in place. While many practices may be seeing more patients, staff shortages often mean they do so with the same or fewer doctors.

Practices under pressure

The changing economics of delivering care to patients presents challenges for most practices. Even as patient visits increase for many, persistently rising operating costs are weighing on profit margins. The top challenges facing practices in the year ahead centre on:



Costs

The top issue facing practices is the Medicare¹ schedule lagging running costs.



Talent

Attracting and retaining staff and managing GP workloads and wellbeing.



Patients

Keeping up with demand, changing perceptions and preferences.

Patients take notice

Compared to 2021, patient satisfaction with the quality of care remains high. However, it has moderated from higher levels in relation to fees, doctor availability and options to book and manage appointments. While the vast majority of patients express loyalty to a preferred GP, convenience and availability are forcing many to look further afield.

How GPs are responding



Sustainable billing

#1 response to rising costs is to shift billing models

Most practices are reviewing billing models to manage top challenges, including the Medicare rebate lagging running costs. Privately billed fees, mixed billing, and variable fee structures are being considered.



Tactics to create capacity

62% of practices nurture a supportive workplace

As talent shortages constrain capacity, attracting and retaining staff is a top priority. A supportive culture and work flexibility stand out as top tactics, followed by higher salaries and professional development opportunities.



Improving the experience

66% of practices plan to lift technology budgets

While technology investment may slow, most practices expect to lift budgets. The fastest growing areas of digital adoption centre on patient convenience and care, and data analytics to track practice performance.



The CommBank GP Insights Report deeply examines general practices' top challenges and priorities and how patient preferences are changing.

Read the full report [here](#) to discover more insights into:

- What patients think about their experiences and the role of technology
- The impact of billing changes on patients and practices
- Practices' operational and financial performance outlook



For more information

about CommBank Health's specialist teams, solutions for health providers and professionals and industry insights, contact **1800 222 484** or visit www.commbank.com.au/healthcare

About the 2023 CommBank GP Insights Report The 2023 CommBank GP Insights Report is based on a quantitative survey of 204 decision-makers and influencers at general practices across Australia and 1,020 patients who had consulted a practice within three months of completing the study. The practice survey was conducted by a mix of practising physicians, business owners and senior decision-makers, with 75% located in capital cities and 25% in other regions. ACA Research conducted the general practice and patient surveys on behalf of CommBank Health in October 2022. The surveys were designed to track perspectives on topical issues and practice priorities. All references to patients and general practices in this report refer to those participating in the surveys unless stated otherwise.

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1 Medicare is the claiming channel that helps practices lodge Medicare bulk bill and patient claims.