



## Cervical screening rates high in Gippsland general practice

3 January 2023

While the cervical screening rate in Gippsland (51.4%) is lower compared to Australia (55.7%), the proportion of the population screened in general practice in Gippsland was the equal highest for Primary Health Network regions nationally.

Latrobe recorded the highest rate of cervical screening in general practice in Gippsland.

The data is highlighted in the Medicare-subsidised GP, allied health and specialist health care across local areas: 2021–22 report that Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN) Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said clearly demonstrated the important role general practices played in improving cervical screening.

“The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on a wide range of health outcomes, so it is pleasing to see that cervical screening under the Practice Incentive Program (PIP) is comparatively high in general practices in the region,” she said.

The PIP Incentive commenced on 1 August 2019. It focuses on 10 Quality Improvement Measures (QIM) and is a payment to general practices for activities that support data-driven continuous quality improvement in patient outcomes and the delivery of best-practice care.

43.8% of females aged 25 to 74 years in Gippsland had a cervical screening test recorded in their GP record within the previous five years (July 2022), compared to 38.2% across Australia.

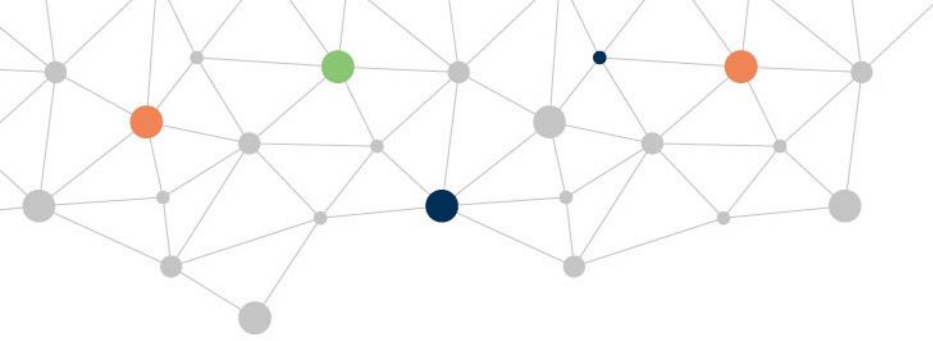
“Gippsland PHN has worked closely with general practice to improve the uptake of and access to cervical screening services,” Ms Proposch explained. “The Latrobe Health Innovation Zone’s Screen for Me initiative clearly had an impact.”

Screen For Me was a social marketing campaign designed to boost community participation in the national breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening programs. It used the strength of local community members to have an influence on their loved one’s health by asking them to Screen For Me. The initiative then expanded to ‘I’ve Screened for Me’ and also supported the ‘It’s Time to Catch Up’ campaign run by the Australian National Cervical Cancer Foundation preceding the pandemic.

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women globally. In Australia, it accounts for almost 2% of all female cancers. Two human papillomavirus (HPV) types are responsible for nearly 50% of high-grade cervical pre-cancers.

“Cervical cancer can be cured if diagnosed at an early stage and treated promptly.” Ms Proposch said. “Vaccination against HPV and screening and treatment of pre-cancer lesions is a cost-effective way to prevent cervical cancer.”

Women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 74 years of age are invited to have a Cervical Screening Test every five years through their healthcare provider. Alternatively, all cervical screening participants now have the choice to self-collect their own Cervical Screening Test sample. See the Department of Health website for more information <https://www.health.gov.au/campaigns/self-collection-for-the-cervical-screening-test>.



Read the full Medicare-subsidised report here <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/primary-health-care/medicare-subsidised-gp-allied-health-and-specialis/contents/technical-information>

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