

## Our Medical Penrith

Our Medical Penrith is a large-scale medical centre that is open to 10pm every day and offers bulk billed GP consults. The centre offers general practice, pharmacy, radiology, pathology, dental, physio, allied health, and includes a 4-bed treatment room and procedure room.

Since its opening in October 2018, it has been a busy medical centre that addresses the local need for accessible healthcare 7 days a week, with up to 3,500 patients seen each week by 18 full-time GPs. Through its extended hours the centre has helped reduce less serious illness and injury from presenting at Nepean Hospital, particularly on evenings and weekends.

Under the old system, Our Medical Penrith was classified as DWS, however, it no longer qualifies for DPA, despite ongoing difficulties of recruiting GPs to the outer metropolitan region.



Penrith is an established, but growing community with a projected increase of 167,650 between 2016 and 2041. The Penrith LGA also has a higher rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations compared to the national average. Therefore, a medical centre the size of Our Medical Penrith is critical to service the growing local community.

### Snapshot

In March 2020, 14 full-time GPs at Our Medical Penrith supported 9,500 patients per month. In conjunction with Federal Government, Our Medical Penrith established a Respiratory Clinic to triage patients with respiratory symptoms, and test for COVID-19. The Respiratory Clinic has been a critical COVID-19 testing facility for the Penrith area ever since.

Over the past eighteen months, GP patient numbers have grown by over 30%. Our Medical Penrith has been open every day during lockdown, despite additional daily challenges of COVID-19.

Our Medical Penrith is also the COVID-19 immunisation hub for entire Penrith area, providing vaccinations at the medical centre for the general public as well as priority workers, including aged-care workers. The centre has also been supporting the broader community through COVID-19 vaccinations and rapid testing at essential businesses such as factories and manufacturing.

### Impacts of COVID-19

Dr Harry Pope has been the Clinical Lead Doctor at Our Medical Penrith for several years and works closely with the local PHN.

Dr Pope said: "At the start of the pandemic we were one of the first medical centres in Greater Western Sydney to launch a dedicated respiratory clinic. This enabled us to treat and test patients with upper respiratory concerns, while continuing to operate the medical centre safely."

"As general practitioners we have been at the frontline of the pandemic and have continued to provide a high level of care to the local community, every day. Since the pandemic began, there has been a decrease in patients visiting their doctor face to face for ongoing medical concerns," Dr Pope said.

"As restrictions ease, we need to be confident that we have enough doctors available to service the local community and address concerns such as chronic disease management, mental health, or ongoing COVID vaccinations," Dr Pope concluded.

