



Templates for contacting patients

These templates are to help you talk to patients about Health Care Homes.

You can adapt the following to suit the needs of your practice and your patients:

- ▶ sample letter
- ▶ sample text messages
- ▶ sample email
- ▶ sample text to record for an on-hold message
- ▶ a fact sheet about Health Care Homes.

However, it is important that you do not change information about the key characteristics of Health Care Homes.

If you have any queries about adapting these templates:

- contact your PHN practice facilitator
- or email healthcarehomes@health.gov.au



1. Sample letter

Your practice may choose to contact eligible Health Care Homes' patients via letter. Here is a sample letter for you to use.

[Optional, insert clinician name]

[Insert practice name]

Practice address]

[Insert patient full name]

Patient address]

Dear [title and patient surname],

We would like to invite you to join a new program called Health Care Homes.

What is a Health Care Home?

Health Care Homes is an Australian Government-funded initiative.

Our practice is one of approximately 170 Health Care Homes taking part in this trial program that runs until June 2021.

As a Health Care Home we will be providing patients who have chronic and complex health conditions with more flexible and tailored care. Complex conditions include long-term conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart and lung conditions. [Optional: add information about anything else your practice will do as a Health Care Home.]

What are the benefits?

We are contacting you because we think the Health Care Homes' model of care could be beneficial for you. Here are some of the benefits:

- ▶ Your doctor and care team — you can choose the doctor you currently see to lead a care team. This care team will work with you to look after your health and address any concerns you have. The care team might include your doctor, the practice nurse and medical assistant. [Amend this description of the care team as required for your practice.]
- ▶ A shared care plan — a shared care plan will be developed with you to help set your health goals; and a way of achieving them. It will help us keep an eye on all your conditions and your care.
- ▶ Convenience — you can talk to a member of your care team, without always having to make an appointment with your doctor. We might call or email you about your care; and



sometimes you might only need to see another member of your care team such as the practice nurse. [Optional: We may also provide telehealth consultations.]

What do I do now?

If you would like to know more, call the practice on [insert best contact number here] to make an appointment for an introductory consultation. This appointment may take 30-45 minutes.

At this consultation, you can ask questions about Health Care Homes and we will also confirm that you are eligible for the program.

[Optional: insert information indicating that this will be a long consultation, which is MBS billed. When they call, the patient should tell the receptionist that they are booking a Health Care Homes' consultation.]

[Optional: your practice may wish to include some information about how Health Care Homes patients will be billed once enrolled.]

Do I have to join Health Care Homes?

No. Joining Health Care Homes is voluntary. However, we are contacting you because we think the Health Care Homes model of care could be beneficial for you.

More information

Enclosed is a brochure/factsheet about Health Care Homes. Please take the time to read it. [Reminder: include attach/brochure or fact sheet. Fact sheet is on page 7-8 of this document]

You can also go to the Health Care Homes' website to find out more:

health.gov.au/healthcarehomes-consumer

Yours sincerely,

Clinician/practice sign off here



2. Sample text messages

Your practice may contact eligible Health Care Homes' patients via mobile phone SMS. Here are some sample SMSs for you to use.

You can add website links or attach documents such as the fact sheet (pp7-8 of this document) to any SMS.

SMS 1

Dear [first name of patient], you may be eligible to participate in a new program for people with chronic and complex health conditions. Call our practice on [insert practice number] and ask about Health Care Homes.

SMS 2

Hi [insert name of patient], we think you might benefit from the Health Care Homes' initiative and we are looking for participants. Reply YES if you want to hear more, or phone us to make an appointment [insert practice phone number] and we can check if you're eligible.

SMS 3 (follow up SMS1 or SMS2)

Dear [insert first name of patient], your appointment with [name of practice/doctor] is scheduled for [insert date and time] to talk about Health Care Homes. [Your doctor/nurse] will talk to you about the program and confirm your eligibility. If you need to cancel or reschedule please call the surgery on [insert surgery phone number].

SMS 4

Dear [insert first name of patient], as a regular at our practice, we would like to talk to you about joining a new program that offers flexible, tailored care for people with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, arthritis or other conditions. It's called Health Care Homes. For an appointment to discuss, please call the practice on [insert practice phone number] or reply YES if you want to be sent more information.



3. Sample email

Your practice may choose to contact eligible Health Care Homes' patients via email. Here is a sample email for you to use.

Subject line: new program for people with chronic health conditions — invitation to participate

Dear [insert patient name],

I am contacting you because I think you may be eligible to participate in a new government-funded program we are taking part in — Health Care Homes.

Health Care Homes is for patients who have chronic health conditions.

This could be anything from diabetes, to a heart or lung condition. Health Care Homes provides us with more resources to help coordinate your health care.

Health Care Homes will run for two years. It is based in our practice and you can see your usual GP, or if you prefer another one of our GPs.

It will also allow you to see the practice nurse or another member of a care team which will work with you. You won't always have to book in to see your GP if you don't need to.

It will give us more flexibility in the way we can care for your health conditions.

To find out more, you can call and make an appointment at the surgery or you can reply to this email.

A fact sheet about Health Care Homes is attached. **[Don't forget to attach the fact sheet.]**

Kind regards

Clinician/practice sign off here



4. Sample text for practice on-hold message

You can adapt and then record this text for a message which callers to your practice will hear if they are put on hold:

“There is new national program for people with chronic – or long-term — health conditions and this practice is taking part in it.

“It’s called Health Care Homes.

“Health Care Homes is about providing a coordinated health care package tailored to the needs of people with chronic conditions.

“If you would like to know more, ask [our receptionist/your doctor/your Aboriginal health worker] about Health Care Homes.”



5. Fact sheet: add this fact sheet to any of your communications with patients

What is a Health Care Home?

Health Care Homes is an Australian Government-funded initiative.

Our practice has been selected as one of about 170 Health Care Homes taking part in this trial program that runs until June 2021.

As a Health Care Home we will be asking some of our patients with chronic conditions to participate in the program. Chronic conditions include long-term conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart and lung conditions.

Being a Health Care Home gives us more flexibility and allows us to give our patients with chronic conditions more coordinated and individualised care.

[Optional: add information about anything else your practice will do as a Health Care Home.]

What are the benefits?

We are contacting you because we think Health Care Homes could be beneficial for you.

Here are some of the benefits:

- ▶ Access to a care team— each Health Care Home patient has their own care team, led by their GP. We will work together to help you look after your health and help address your concerns.
- ▶ A shared care plan — a shared care plan will be developed with you to help set your health goals; and a way of achieving them. It will help us keep an eye on all your conditions and your care needs. This plan is also shared with all the other health providers you see.
- ▶ Your health, your doctor — you choose one of the GPs at this practice as your preferred doctor. You can choose the doctor you currently see. This doctor leads your care team and will oversee your care.
- ▶ Convenience — you can talk to someone from your care team, without always having to make an appointment with your doctor. We might call or email you about your care; and sometimes may only need to see another member of your care team, such as the practice nurse.



What do I do now?

If you would like to know more, call the practice on [insert best contact number here] to make an appointment for an introductory consultation. This appointment may take 30-45 minutes.

At this consultation, your doctor can answer your questions about Health Care Homes. They will also confirm that you are eligible for Health Care Homes.

[Optional: insert information indicating that this will be a long consultation, which is MBS billed. When they call, the patient should tell the receptionist that they are booking a Health Care Homes' consultation.]

[Optional: your practice may wish to include some information about how Health Care Homes' patients will be billed once enrolled.]