

## Men's Business PHC Remote CAHS Guideline

<b>Target Audience</b>	All Clinical Employees
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Primary Health Care Remote CAHS; Primary Health Care Remote TEHS
<b>Jurisdiction Exclusions</b>	N/A
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<b>Approval Authority</b>	Refer to Policy Guideline Centre General Manager Primary Health Care CAHS
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### Purpose

Provides guidance for how Primary Health Care (PHC) - Remote staff may interface with Men's Business in the provision of health care services.

### Guideline

## 1. General Information

This document does not provide information to describe or explain Aboriginal Men's Business, but rather the way Primary Health Care (PHC) - Remote may interface with Men's Business in the provision of health care services. This item relates to practices in Central Australia (CA).

By its nature, Men's Business is in general a private, cultural experience only involving invited men. PHC respects the required privacy while also acknowledging that provision of health care will at times be necessary during ceremonial business. Therefore the guidelines contained in this document seek to facilitate functional arrangements that will allow staff to maintain professional integrity and respect the privacy of ceremonial business.

Men's Business does vary from location to location in its nature, degree of sensitivity and the appropriateness for outsiders to be involved. Regardless of these variations, there are a number of key principles that should be generally applied whenever health staff are involved:

- PHC staff involvement in Men's Business must be subject to the invitation and direction of senior men or their delegates in consultation with the Primary Health Care Manager (PHCM). Even in an emergency, the direction of the senior men is recommended.
- Whenever possible male staff should carry out any aspects of health care relating to Men's Business. Female staff may need to be involved at times when no male staff are available. Such involvement should be as indirect wherever possible in consultation with the PHCM and senior men.
- PHC staff should respond to any reports of Men's Business in regard to safe travel to remote communities according to the [CA PHC Men's Business Procedure Flowchart](#).

Section 4 of this document provides more detail regarding:

- [Health Staff Involvement with Men's Business](#)
- [Dedicated Involvement by Male Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners / Aboriginal Community Workers](#)
- [Treatment Protocols](#)
- [Men's Ceremonial Kits](#)
- [CA Men's Business Reference Group](#)
- [Leave Arrangements for Male Indigenous Staff participating in Men's Business](#)

*Note: guidelines for indigenous male staff personally participating in Men's Business are also provided.*

## 2. Definitions

**Business:** traditional ceremonial time.

**Senior men:** Aboriginal men recognised within their cultural group for their seniority in matters of ceremonial business.

**Scheduled Substance Treatment Protocol (SSTP):** is a protocol for possessing, supplying or administering a scheduled substance as approved by the Chief Health Officer under Section 254 of the Northern Territory (NT) [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act](#).

## 3. Responsibilities

### 3.1 Male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners (ATSIHPs) / Aboriginal Community Workers (ACW)

- Manage the Men's Ceremonial Kits\*
- Liaise between senior men and health centre staff
- Attend Business camp in a dedicated capacity where prior arrangements and approval have been established. See [4.2](#).
- When attending business in a dedicated capacity, remain accountable to the PHCM and be available for other health centre business if required.

*\* Note: Where there is no male ATSIHP / ACW on staff, management of the Ceremonial Kit may also be delegated to a male Aboriginal community member who is assuming a liaison role between health staff and the men during ceremony time.*

### 3.2 All Clinical Staff

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality pertaining to men's business
- Manage clinical conditions arising from men's business in accordance with [SSTPs](#) with particular attention to the specific SSTP [Men's Ceremonial Business SSTP](#)
- Ensure adequate replacement stock is available, especially prior to ceremony time
- Restock the kit where requested
- Assist in obtaining a new restocked kit when requested
- Refer any questions regarding the kit to the Male Health Coordinators PHC Outreach Team. (via CAHS PHC Office, phone: 08 8955 6100)

### 3.3 Primary Health Care - Senior Managers

- Authorise male health workers ATSIHP or ACW secondment to attend Business camps in a dedicated capacity, ensuring attendance is valid and warranted

### 3.4 Male Health Coordinators PHC Outreach Team

- Liaise with key men in each community
- Provide education to community men regarding the appropriate use of specific contents of the kit
- Remind appropriate health centre staff member to prepare the Kit prior to business time
- Provide advice to the health centre / community re ordering Ceremonial Kit contents via the usual Stores ordering processes
- Advise staff on the culturally appropriate etiquette relating to the management of this kit
- Refer staff as required, to the Male Health Coordinators PHC Outreach Team, or other appropriate resource people

### 3.5 CA Men's Business Reference Group

- Meet annually in September per [Terms of Reference \(TOR\)](#)

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Health Staff Involvement with Men's Business

#### 4.1.1 Principles

As noted above, general principles must be applied with any health staff involvement in Men's Business:

- Direct involvement is limited to invitation from senior men or their reasonable delegates, and involvement should be carried out under their direction.
- Male staff involvement should always be facilitated when available, in preference to female staff. In the instance of female staff needing to be involved, involvement should be as indirect as possible, although care must be taken not to dismiss professional accountabilities.

#### 4.1.2 Types of Involvement

##### Preparation:

In the lead up to the season of Men's Business, dialogue with relevant men may be possible allowing health promotion to occur. Health promotion should include advice on where the Ceremonial Kits are stored and how their contents should be used. Discussion about safe practices and reasonable expectations about treatment regimes is required. In general, pre-season engagement is best attended by dedicated male health promotion / education staff members engaged by the PHC Outreach Male Health Unit.

In some instances, names of local and visiting initiates may be able to be identified which can be helpful in sourcing pertinent aspects of visitor's medical history (allergies, prescribed medicines etc) before the event. However, note that names are not always forthcoming, and disclosure, while helpful to health staff, should not be coerced.

The [Men's Ceremonial Business SSTP](#) also provides information regarding discussion with relevant senior community men and provision of opportunistic Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) screening as appropriate.

The [CA PHC Men's Business Procedure Flowchart](#) is to be used to promote safe travel to remote communities during men's ceremonial time while respecting the privacy and cultural needs of aboriginal men during times ceremonial business.

##### Ceremonial Kits:

Staff are expected to ensure there is a sufficient stock in supply and restocking of Men's Ceremonial Kits. See [4.4](#) All contents of Ceremonial Kits are available from Regional Stores in Alice Springs.

The [Men's Ceremonial Kits Information Sheet](#) provides summary information.

### **Clinical Care:**

Men's Business is considered a private, sensitive, cultural experience only involving invited men and care is often modified with respect to other sensitivities of Business.

Traditional cultural healing methods used by senior men is seen as appropriate prior to medical intervention. Any clinical intervention and use of medicines should be in consultation with ATSIHP or PHCM and depending on the seriousness of a patient condition a medical consultation may be necessary.

As always, health care is to be provided in accordance with [SSTPs](#), and in particular the [Men's Ceremonial Business SSTP](#). Treatment of clinical conditions directly resulting from ceremonial activities is discussed below at [4.3](#).

During Business time, routine health care may be provided at the camp (if invited) although occasionally men will attend the health centre in some situations. Of particular importance, staff must take care not to be pressured into providing care in a manner that compromises their professional integrity (eg requests for Bicillin for prophylaxis). While there may at times be pressure to remotely manage a clinical scenario, Nurses or ATSIHPs must not supply Schedule 4 or 8 medicines via a third party to deliver medicines. The potential difficulties that may be encountered in this area are best managed through respectful discussion, and where possible, involvement of an appropriate third party. (PHCM, ATSIHP / ACW briefed on accepted Men's Business Reference Group recommendations)

Consideration should be given to utilising the Duty Rural Medical Practitioner (RMP) On-Call to help support the Nurse / ATSIHP even if the condition otherwise would not routinely involve an RMP. In the extreme situation of a staff member being asked to provide treatments against their professional judgement, the staff member should notify the Manager on-call as soon as possible, to discuss the issue.

#### **4.1.3 Use of Department of Health (DoH) Vehicles**

The use of DoH vehicles are as per DoH policy and must always be under the control of a DoH staff member (limited exceptions exist for DoH vehicles to be driven by pre-approved volunteer drivers or other persons in extreme emergencies; see [Emergency Vehicles](#)). DoH vehicles may only be used to transport health staff or clients and for purposes directly relating to health business.

Where a staff member is allocated to attend the Business camp in a dedicated capacity rather than providing intermittent care (see below) this will not include allocation of the vehicle. DoH vehicles must always remain based at the local health centre for health service emergency needs. The PHCM must exercise their judgement as to the duration of use in that instance.

## **4.2 Dedicated Involvement by Male Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners / Aboriginal Community Workers**

PHC will at times support the presence of male ATSIHP / ACW staff to assist with health care at Men's Business, in a more dedicated manner than the intermittent care that a local health centre would routinely provide. This support must be authorised by the respective District Manager, who is responsible to ensure the validity of the request.

This dedicated involvement is for the purpose of health promotion at the camp, facilitation of delivery of health care, managing the use of ceremonial kits, liaison between the camp and the health centre.

While this involvement has the potential to be a highly suitable arrangement for providing and promoting health care, it is important to recognise that PHC Remote provides the ATSIHPs / ACW to attend the ceremonial Business camp as an employee. If ATSIHPs / ACWs wish to attend the camp for personal involvement in Business, then relevant leave options should be utilised. See [4.6](#).

In keeping with the ATSIHP / ACW attending the Business camp as an employee several expectations are explained here to guide this unique employment situation:

- the ATSIHP / ACW is accountable to the local PHCM
- at a minimum, the ATSIHP / ACW should attend the health centre at the beginning of each day to liaise with PHCM / staff to appropriately discuss and plan daily work activities

- the ATSIHP / ACW must be available to return to the health centre to assist with emergencies or other periods of high workload, if directed by the PHCM
- 4 weeks is the usual maximum allocation of time that this involvement can occur. Any further time must be specifically re-negotiated and authorised by their respective line and District Manager
- where applicable, ATSIHPs / ACWs from other locations will be considered eligible for Travel Allowance, and have travel costs met subject to usual authorisation involving prior agreement
- as noted above, allocation of DoH vehicles for use in a dedicated-only capacity, is not authorised

### 4.3 Treatment Protocols

Routine use of [SSTPs](#) and [Additional Clinical Protocols](#) apply, however it is noted that there are unique clinical management scenarios that arise specifically relating to Men’s Business practices. Consequently, a specialised [Men’s Ceremonial Business SSTP](#) has been developed, and been approved by the Chief Health Officer via [Government Gazette S34](#). Traditional cultural healing methods may be used by senior men as seen as appropriate prior to medical intervention.

### 4.4 Men’s Ceremonial Kits

*Background Information:*

*Men’s Ceremonial Kits (red toolboxes) were first established and introduced into the Anangu-Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands of Central Australia (CA) by [Nganampa Health Service](#) in conjunction with senior Anangu men. This was part of their safe ceremonies strategy, for use specifically during ceremonial business. Senior men from the APY lands developed their own symbol, depicting safe ceremonial practices shielding the men from the risk of infection.*

*In 1997, the Tristate STI/HIV Project provided funding for the provision and distribution of the kits throughout the Aboriginal communities of CA, including those in the NT, APY Lands and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. The kits have been widely accepted by senior men throughout these regions.*

PHC recognises and values the use of ceremonial kits as a primary health care risk reduction strategy.

The Men’s Ceremonial Kits are not considered mandatory equipment in health centres. However, the provision of kits is noted to be linked to cultural practices in the Central Australian region, and the provision and restocking of such a kit will be supported as long as it considered acceptable practice by Aboriginal people and requested by senior men.

#### 4.4.1 Supply of a New Ceremonial Kits

When senior men request help in obtaining a ceremonial kit, health centre staff are expected to support the request. Where a kit is not already available, health centre staff should contact the Male PHC Outreach Unit via CAHS PHC Office, phone: 08 8955 6100 for assistance and advice.

Usually, metal tool boxes are used to house the contents of the Men’s Ceremonial Kit.

**Minimum standard for the Ceremonial Kit:**

A basic toolbox:

- Stocked with the agreed minimum [contents](#)
- Externally labelled – with community and a Safe Ceremony sticker if available
- containing a [contents](#) list on the inside of the lid

**Safe Ceremonies Symbol**



#### 4.4.2 Restocking the Contents

Where senior men request the provision of stock to replenish the [contents](#) of the kit, Health Centre staff are expected to support the request. It is also important for reasons of cultural safety that questions are NOT asked about the use of any items.

Most items are imprest stock, and can be ordered directly from Stores. Adequate levels of appropriate stock should be maintained, especially prior to business time. Any non-imprest items requested should be discussed with the PHC Outreach Male Health Coordinators via CAHS PHC Office, phone: 08 8955 6100.

#### 4.4.3 Storage and Location of the Kit

The health centre is often preferred as the common place due to the safe disposal of sharp and restocking needs. If stored in the health centre, it is essential to store discreetly, preferably in a men's area. It should be readily available to the senior men when requested.

The kit does not necessarily need to be stored in the health centre. It may be stored where ever the senior men wish to store it *however* an appropriate known senior man should be responsible for returning the Kit to the health centre for correct sharps disposal and restocking.

All equipment in this Kit is available from Regional Stores in Alice Springs.

If there are any queries please contact the PHC Outreach Male Health Coordinators via CAHS PHC Office, phone 08 8955 6100.

#### 4.5 CA Men's Business Reference Group

A number of key individuals / positions within CAHS and different agencies form the Men's Business Reference Group which exists to collaboratively review the Ceremonial Kit arrangements on an annual basis according to its [Terms of Reference](#). This ensures:

- periodic review of an acceptable minimum contents list
- review of processes, and involvement and shared knowledge among the current list of key resource people
- generation of an agreed plan for education at community level, prior to the commencement of business each year.

#### 4.6 Leave Arrangements for Male Indigenous Staff participating in Men's Business

Male indigenous staff members wishing to attend Men's Business as a participant must apply for leave. Valid paid leave options that may be accessed include [Annual Recreation Leave](#) or [Time off in Lieu](#) where leave balances allow or the option for unpaid leave is Special Leave without Pay.

The cultural importance of Men's Business to male indigenous staff is appreciated. Therefore line managers are expected to assist these men in prioritising applications relating to this issue.

### Document Quality Assurance

	Method	Responsibility
<b>Implementation</b>	Document will be accessible via the Policy Guidelines Centre and Remote Health Atlas	Health Policy Guidelines Program Atlas Development Officer, Primary Health Care CAHS
<b>Review</b>	Document is to be reviewed within three years, or as changes in practice occur	Atlas Development Officer, Primary Health Care CAHS
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluation will be ongoing and informal, based on feedback.	Atlas Development Officer, Primary Health Care CAHS

### Key Associated Documents

<b>Forms</b>	Nil
<b>Key Legislation, By-Laws, Standards, Delegations, Aligned &amp; Supporting Documents</b>	<p><a href="#">Additional Clinical Protocols</a></p> <p><a href="#">Leave Overview PHC Remote CAHS Guideline</a></p> <p><a href="#">Management On-Call PHC Remote CAHS Guideline</a></p> <p>Information Sheets: <a href="#">Men's Ceremonial Kit Minimum Contents List</a></p> <p><a href="#">Men's Ceremonial Kits Information Sheet</a></p> <p><a href="#">CA PHC Men's Business Procedure Flowchart</a></p> <p><a href="#">Minimum Contents for Men's Ceremonial Kits</a></p> <p><a href="#">Central Australian Men's Business Reference Group - Terms of Reference</a></p> <p><a href="#">Men's Ceremonial Business Scheduled Substance Treatment Protocol (intranet)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Remote Primary Health Care Manuals</a> website: Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association (CARPA) Standard Treatment Manual (STM)</p> <p><a href="#">Central Australia Aboriginal Congress</a></p> <p><a href="#">Centre for Disease Control</a> website</p> <p><a href="#">Nganampa Health Service</a></p> <p><a href="#">Government Gazette S34</a></p>
<b>References</b>	As Above

### Evidence Table

Reference	Method	Evidence level (I-V)	Summary of recommendation from this reference
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A