



Aboriginal ethical position statement

This ethical position statement is for consideration when preparing COVID-19 related clinical guidelines, protocols and planning processes that may impact on Aboriginal people.

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This position statement was developed because Aboriginal people in WA are at a greater risk from morbidity and mortality during a pandemic.

Without specific consideration of community issues and development of culturally appropriate responses, a pandemic is likely to disproportionately affect Aboriginal people and widen the health gap.

Health service providers should:

- ensure the provision of equitable and culturally acceptable health care for our Aboriginal patients; and
- acknowledge broader, non-medical considerations of care when examining measures to respond to the virus. This should include existing disadvantage and health inequities, which are linked to the legacy of colonisation and subsequent government policy.

As with the adoption of any measures that may affect Aboriginal people, their informed consent, grounded in the right to self-determination, should be sought.

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Why is an Aboriginal position statement important?

Aboriginal cultural considerations across all areas of pandemic planning for Aboriginal people is a priority.

The development of ethical frameworks, protocols and clinical guidelines regarding the distribution and prioritisation of resources to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic will be essential.

Aboriginal people experience a significantly higher health burden than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Much of the health burden and disadvantage that has led to these inequities is reflective of colonisation and intergenerational trauma.

This position statement has been developed by the Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate and endorsed by the Senior Aboriginal Health Leadership group.

