



Dear Colleagues,

As promised, each week I will send an email summing up the previous week's activities as part of our COVID-19 response.

Preparedness initiatives last week

- Added 115 inpatient beds available for COVID-19 patients across Metro North.
- Expanded ICU capacity across the HHS.
- Our Virtual Ward currently has 800 bed capacity.
- Community home based care has been expanded to accommodate an additional 80 patients.
- Established the Metro North Virtual ED, to provide support to admit appropriate COVID-19 patients into our Virtual Wards.
- Started postponing or cancelling all non-urgent elective surgery, in line with Prime Minister's announcement, which will create additional capacity in wards, ICU and staffing.
- Recruited 100 third year nursing students as Assistants in Nursing (AIN) to commence as soon as possible.
- Recruited 130 FTE nursing new graduates
- Advertised five new nurse practitioner positions and additional experienced registered nurse and midwifery pool staff.
- Streamlined staff redeployment for nursing and midwifery, including identification of skillset scope of practice for indirect positions, such as reallocation of indirect staff to work for fever clinics, virtual wards and other COVID-19 response activities.
- Developed or modified resources to coordinate a streamlined process for our nursing and midwifery workforce availability and maximise their capacity.
- Modified existing resources available for upskilling staff based on a gap analysis across facilities and directorates.
- Mobilised a nurse navigator network who will focus on COVID-19 related activities.
- Began upskilling staff to support clinical needs and tiered response strategies.
- Secured the ability to bypass procurement to secure necessary supplies and resources.
- Continued medical workforce planning.
- Workforce planning, human resources, and Digital Metro North teams have been provided clinical support for planning and operations in relation to COVID-19.
- Established clinical lead for clinical planning cell to support models of care for ED, ICU and inpatient wards.
- Provided clinical support for community fever clinics, community linkages with RADAR, Hospital in the Home and hospital avoidance models.

- Established the directorate and clinical support for the Metro North Virtual Wards and the Metro North Virtual ED.

Our activity for the past week

- As at 10am yesterday, we have had 208 confirmed COVID-19 patients in Metro North, including 27 who have recovered and sadly one inpatient who passed away.
- More than 1450 people have presented to our two community assessment clinics at Brighton Health Campus and Pine Rivers Community Health Centre.
- Assessment and testing through fever clinics brings the total to more than 2734 presentations in the Metro North region in the last 14 days.
- Continued airport screening activities with around 40 people per day screened in the past week.
- Coordinated home visits for the clinical clearance of suspected COVID-19 patients.
- We established the new process for screening at the Brisbane International Airport in conjunction with Metro North Public Health Unit.
- Web resources were updated to reflect testing criteria changes and the most up to date case definition information from the Communicable Diseases Network Australia Series of National Guidelines (CDNA SoNG).
- Established a daily teleconference with Metro North Patient Support Service (including Protective Services) to address concerns, questions and troubleshoot issues.
- Review of product information regarding alternative hand sanitiser sources.
- Provided clinical input into the development of the DCOVA app from Digital Metro North.
- Rolled out COVID-19 desktop icon on Metro North devices so staff can quickly see the latest information.
- Established a clinical lead for the Clinical Advisory Group.

Looking after our people

For those staff affected by childcare centre closures, our team have sourced vacation care centres that have capacity to care for essential workers' children over the school holidays. This information is available on the Metro North [COVID-19 page](#).

For those people whose roles can be done at home and those who are not required to have a physical presence, Digital Metro North has created working from home instructions. These should be read in line with HR guidance on flexible working arrangements and leave provisions and discussed with your supervisor.

Please also read the guidance on the COVID-19 page about staff in vulnerable groups to help staff identify whether you are at higher risk.

It's important for those staff working from home to consider patient privacy and confidentiality. We have created a [factsheet to assist](#).

Please contact the HR staff phone hotline on 3647 2819 or email metronorthhr@health.qld.gov.au if you have HR related questions that aren't covered by the factsheets online.

Preparedness initiatives in the coming week

- Expanding ICU capacity to create 149 beds by end of next week.
- Extending Virtual Ward capacity with another 800 beds, to create 1600 beds by end of next week.
- Adding another 155 inpatient beds available for COVID-19 patients.

- Conserving personal protective equipment (PPE) planning and investigating manufacturing options.
- Virtual ED goes live today to support admission to Virtual Wards.
- Minimising entry and exit points in all facilities.
- Continuing to monitor elective and non-urgent procedural activity.
- Suspending BreastScreen services.
- Working with private hospitals to utilise capacity across sectors.
- Meeting with our onsite partners to identify any potential clinical and non-clinical spaces to utilise in response.
- Supporting staff training in virtual work environment.
- Orientation goes digital today.
- Workforce planning continues to document changing workforce models in line with the changing service environment and to identify available workforce within and external to Metro North to support response.
- Continuing to work with State and Commonwealth teams on progressing placement of long stay NDIS participants into safe and appropriate accommodation in the community.
- Exploring all options for rapid placement of patients requiring residential aged care into appropriate residential aged care.
- The updated Metro North COVID-19 response plan will be uploaded to the COVID-19 page today.

Maximising our resources

The Queensland Health Director-General announced over the weekend that new personal protective equipment stocks have arrived in Queensland. To ensure we have continued supplies for those who need them, we are also taking action to conserve our PPE and continuing to investigate alternative supply and manufacturing options.

Regards,
Shaun