



COVID-19

METRO NORTH WRAP-UP

ISSUE 1: 27 MARCH 2020



MESSAGE FROM SHAUN

Welcome to our first COVID-19 wrap-up – a central source of information for you during an ever-evolving situation. We want to reassure that as a health service we can and will respond to the changing nature of COVID-19. Since late January, we have had our Emergency Operation Centre activated to respond to the daily requirements of COVID-19 and are also implementing our Pandemic Response Plan. Information will be key over the next few months and we're committed to keeping you informed. As well as this update we will do so via continued daily messages from Dr Liz Rushbrook and regular ED messages from our facilities, as well as refreshing our QHEPS content, holding staff forums and ensuring we have posters around the place. We're open to hearing about how else you'd like to hear from us, so please drop us a line. Our focus is keeping you up-to date and ensuring you feel supported. Responding to health is our business and you can have confidence in us during this time. A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you at Metro North. You are important in our response to COVID-19 and your commitment to our values is deeply appreciated.

Kind regards,

Shaun Drummond

Chief Executive

Metro North Hospital and Health Service

THE CURRENT SITUATION ACROSS QUEENSLAND

The COVID-19 situation is continually changing across Queensland and Metro North is being guided by the Chief Health Officer and Federal and State Governments, who are leading the response across all hospital and health services. At Metro North, we're committed to working with all our partners to ensure a streamlined approach. We have now activated our Pandemic Response Plan which includes strategies to increase our capacity for intensive care units and emergency departments and to stop our non-acute services and elective surgery.



HOW ARE WE RESPONDING?

Metro North has been agile and proactive in our response to patient and staff care during this time. As part of our work we've implemented:

- **Fever Clinics and Community Assessment Clinics:**

We have implemented Fever Clinics across our hospitals and Community Assessment Clinics at both Brighton and Pine Rivers to screen and test patients for COVID-19. Our Pine Rivers Community Assessment Clinic provides a drive-through alternative to further assist with the needs of our patients.

- **Virtual Wards and Telehealth:**

We have implemented a virtual ward model across our HHS, welcoming eligible patients with mild symptoms to receive the care they need while recovering in their own home. Leveraging technology across our digital and telehealth platforms, the model allows our patients to recover in their own surroundings while easing the load on our busy hospitals to allow space for patients requiring hospital treatment. Telehealth is also being used to service outpatient appointments, to prevent people physically attending our facilities if they don't have to.

- **Non-essential meetings and events:**

All non-essential meetings and events have been postponed at this stage, as we practice physical distancing to do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. While this might be the case, we encourage you to still check in with your friends and colleagues at work or with technology.



**Queensland
Government**

HR 101

Understanding the changes to your role or situation can be tricky to navigate, but HR are here to help! With a dedicated HR Hotline (07 3647 2819) and email (MetroNorthHR@health.qld.gov.au) – the team are ready to your questions and advise you on specific information you need. There's also plenty of resources available on QHEPS including details on leave, wellbeing and flexible working arrangements.

THE TEAM
ARE READY TO
TACKLE YOUR
QUESTIONS

PRESERVING PPE AND TESTING CRITERIA

To help us guarantee the safety of ourselves and our patients over coming months, we need to preserve our precious PPE supplies for when it is most needed. All our PPE stocks are secured ensuring those that need these, have access to them. If you need a PPE refresher, there are plenty on QHEPS.

Testing criteria for our Fever Clinics and Community Assessment Clinics also ensures we are responsibly using PPE. The National Guidelines for the COVID-19 Case Definition were revised this week. Within this revision, testing guidelines for healthcare workers have been expanded.

- Any person who has travelled overseas within the 14 days before the onset of fever (≥ 38 degrees Celsius) or history of fever (e.g. night sweat or chills) or acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) with or without fever;
- Any person with close contact in 14 days before illness onset with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and who are now exhibiting fever (≥ 38 degrees Celsius) or history of fever (e.g. night sweat or chills) or acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) with or without fever;
- Any person with severe community-acquired pneumonia requiring admission, and no other cause identified, with or without recent international travel.
- Any healthcare worker with direct patient contact with a fever (≥ 38 degrees Celsius) or history of fever (e.g. night sweat or chills) or acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) with or without fever.

Anyone who doesn't meet the above criteria but is concerned about symptoms should contact their GP via phone to arrange an appointment or call 13HEALTH. Additionally, please stay home and recover if you're unwell.

WE NEED TO
PRESERVE OUR
PRECIOUS PPE

WORKING TOGETHER WITH PARTNERS AND CONSUMERS

As part of our commitment to care, we're working with our key partners including the Brisbane North PHN, GSs and aged care providers, as well as consumers, to ensure our initiatives are best meeting the needs of everyone. As part of this, we're working with consumers to co-design some of our adapted or expanded models of care and will continue to work together on these. We're also regularly keeping these key groups informed and across the changing situation.

For more information visit qheps.health.qld.gov.au/metronorth

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Visit metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/extranet/coronavirus for our latest COVID-19 updates

Metro North Communications provides information about what's happening across Metro North Hospital and Health Service, including new initiatives, staff profiles, patient stories and details of upcoming events. Contributions for articles are appreciated. Please send them to the Communications team – phone (07) 3647 9525 or email MetroNorth-Communications@health.qld.gov.au