



## COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) update – 10 March 2020

Dear colleagues,

Here is the latest news over the last 24 hours:

- New “COVID-19 Pathology Testing for Suspect Cases” guideline published
- Staff testing service
- Planning update

### **New COVID-19 Pathology Testing for Suspect Cases criteria**

We have developed guidance clarifying testing criteria for patients with suspected COVID-19 and these are now available on the [Metro North COVID-19 intranet page](#). Key updates include the ability to use a single swab to sample two sites (oropharynx and nasopharynx) as a combined test, rather than two separate swabs which has been the process to date. These changes have simplified the testing process to support more efficient and effective processing and turnaround times for patient results.

### **Staff testing service**

We are now also offering a more streamlined service for staff that require testing for COVID-19. RBWH, TPCH, Caboolture and Redcliffe Hospitals all have dedicated Fever Clinics, each of which has developed processes to streamline staff presentations if needed. If you have respiratory illness symptoms, please visit your hospital's respective Fever Clinic before attending work. Healthcare workers who are tested are considered as a suspect case and unable to undertake clinical work until the result is available.

I would like to remind staff about the importance of maintaining good hand hygiene practices in and out of the workplace. Please make sure you wash your hands, practice cough etiquette and stay home if you are unwell.

### **Planning update**

We continue our comprehensive planning process as part of the Statewide response to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Today, members of the Metro North's executive team attended a Statewide workshop with Health Service Chief Executives, the Department of Health, and the Director-General to critically discuss broader system planning and support.

I openly acknowledge this is a very busy and work intensive period for all across the organisation. I appreciate that we are all planning and responding to this situation in our various roles, and we are no doubt all feeling the pressure. Now is the time when we need to pull together as a team, be kind and support each other.

I thank you all for your commitment.

Kind regards,

**Dr Liz Rushbrook**

Metro North Health Incident Controller

<sup>[1]</sup> Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health Units

<sup>2</sup> State Health Emergency Coordination Centre Situation Report No 84 of 09 March 2020 (notal)