



## COVID-19 (coronavirus) update – 15 March 2020

Dear colleagues,

In my update today, I would like to address the following issues:

- PPE and consumables
- Changes for incoming travellers
- Virtual ward

### **PPE and consumables**

As Queensland and Metro North see increasing numbers of people presenting to Emergency Departments and hospital fever clinics, we need to be diligent with sensible use and monitoring of our precious PPE and associated consumables.

It is vitally important that staff working in areas that may come in direct contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 have the recommended PPE available. Where possible and as a priority, we should be conserving our PPE and associated consumables for this purpose. I urge you all to identify opportunities for conservation, including reducing the number of observers or visitors in operating suites or other areas that require PPE.

Queensland Health has released guidance in relation to General considerations for conserving PPE which is available [here](#). It is important for us to know when we need to use PPE and when it is not clinically necessary. Guidance in relation to the use of PPE is available on the [Metro North COVID-19](#) intranet site. I encourage staff to familiarise themselves with these Guidelines as a matter of importance.

PPE is a valuable resource, and correct management and use is essential, to enable us to effectively support the health needs of our community.

### **Changes for incoming travellers**

Today, the Government announced that all incoming international travellers will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. International cruise ships will also be banned from docking in Australia for 30 days. We are currently working to implement these announcements for Brisbane airport and sea-ports within our area.

This change will affect staff members that are currently overseas and who intend to return to Australia. If you, or one of your staff will be affected, please work with your Line Manager and Executive Director to put the necessary arrangements in place.

### **Virtual ward**

As part of our response to an increasing number COVID-19 admissions to our hospitals, Metro North is planning and implementing alternative models of care to support patients as they recover from the illness. One of the new initiatives is the introduction of a 'virtual ward' model. This model leverages from our current HITH and PACS models of care, as well as available digital and telehealth platforms. This is a collaborative effort between clinicians,

consumers, Digital Metro North, Health Information Managers and administrators. Adversity creates opportunity!

I appreciate these are challenging times and I would like to thank staff for their patience and diligence in this everchanging environment.

Kind regards,

**Dr Liz Rushbrook**  
Metro North Health Incident Controller