



## **COVID-19 (coronavirus) update – 17 March 2020**

Dear colleagues,

Metro North's response to COVID-19 continues to change and evolve on a daily basis. As Queensland's largest Hospital and Health Service, we need to step up to the challenge and, where required, do things differently to help minimise the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. I would like to challenge you lean forward into necessary changes so that we can meet this challenge 'head on'.

### **Virtual patients clinics and work spaces**

As a workforce, I'm calling on every one of us to explore how we can reimagine our workspaces and how we are delivering patient care. While our Virtual Wards are already up and running, this is the time to be brave and explore how we can shift our current models of care to virtual models of care. Have we maximised the use of technology to enable virtual care at every available turn? Can we send it? Can we delay it? Can we streamline it?

The time to act is NOW. No idea is too silly. Have a conversation with your team and line manager about a what virtual workspace could look like in your areas and start to put plans in place.

### **HR Hotline and Email**

In order to help our people with any HR queries they may have regarding COVID-19, a central HR hotline phone number and email address has been created.

You can reach this service by phone on **3647 2819** or by email [MetroNorthHR@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MetroNorthHR@health.qld.gov.au).

Immediate hours of operation will be 8am until 5pm and are expected to be extended in the coming days.

### **Social Distancing in the Workplace**

Social distancing and hand hygiene still remain effective ways of preventing disease transmission. At work, social distancing looks like:

1. Stay at home if you are sick.
2. Stop handshaking as a greeting. Keep your greetings fun – toe tap, elbow bump, or even try a 'salute'.
3. Hold meetings via video conferencing or phone call. Microsoft teams is available to us all – give it a try.
4. Review patients via telephone, video conferencing or via email/SMS.
5. Defer large meetings.
6. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water.

7. Don't touch your face (eyes, nose and mouth).
8. Cover coughs and sneezes.
9. Keep 1.5m away from others – set your staff room up into one or two 'zones'.
10. Take lunch outside.
11. Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly.
12. Limit food handling and sharing of food in the workplace.
13. Consider staggering work times – so that those using public transport can avoid crowds, less people in the 'office' at any one time.
14. If you are unwell, call your doctor or call 13 HEALTH.

There is a suite of new resources available on the [COVID-19 intranet page](#), including posters for the workplace as a visual reminder. Please continue to regularly visit this site as we are adding more every day.

### **Local council elections**

There are local council elections coming up on the 28<sup>th</sup> March. I would like to alert you all to the increased availability of early voting booths right across Brisbane. You are able to attend these booths during 'office hours' and on Saturday 21 March to vote prior to election day. I would encourage you to consider this as one option to avoid 'crowds'. More information is available [online](#).

As we prepare to do work differently over the coming days and weeks, I thank you all for your flexibility and your readiness to act.

Kind regards,

**Dr Liz Rushbrook**

Metro North Health Incident Controller