



COVID-19 (coronavirus) update – 19 March 2020

Dear colleagues,

Despite our health service becomes increasingly busy with our response to COVID-19, we continue to provide world class health care to our community. Today, I would like to update you on some key developments that have happened over the past 24 hours.

Changes to travel information

This afternoon, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that from 9pm tomorrow (20 March 2020), all foreign travellers will be banned from entering Australia. This applies to all non-citizens and non-residents. Australians will still be able to return from overseas, however they will continue to be required to self-quarantine for 14 days directly following their return.

Metro North health initiatives

Metro North is committed to keeping our staff, patients and visitors safe. We have cancelled all non-essential training and education and have a number of new strategies in place across the HHS to ensure we are practicing social distancing. We are also auditing our cleaning practices and directing additional services to high flow patient areas which require extra attention.

We will continue to review our procedures and adapt them in line with State and Federal Health advice.

When to use PPE

As I have mentioned, PPE is a valuable resource and it is essential that we conserve it where possible. Before fitting PPE, please ask yourself:

1. Am I providing healthcare to a patient who requires screening for COVID-19?
2. Am I providing healthcare to a confirmed COVID-19 patient?
3. Is the use of PPE part of my business as usual procedures?

If you answer is yes to any of these questions, please use PPE as per the instructions provided on the [QHEPS page](#). There is now a poster available on the page for you to print and display around your work areas as a reminder to all staff.

Virtual Ward update

We continue to refine our Virtual Ward model to ensure it is scalable for large numbers of patients should this be required. Today we have appointed a leadership team who are highly experienced in delivering this type of care. They are charged with the responsibility to expand, mature and operationalise the model at scale so

that we can effectively manage the expected number of COVID-19 patients in the coming weeks.

During this busy time, please remember to check in with yourself and with your colleagues and ensure you are looking after your physical and mental health. As a healthy and happy workforce, there's no limit for what we can achieve.

Kind regards,

Dr Liz Rushbrook
Metro North Health Incident Controller