



COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Metro North Hospital and Health Service - *Putting people first*



Message from the Executive Director

MEDICAL SERVICES

Dr Elizabeth Rushbrook

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) update – 26 March 2020

Dear colleagues,

As you would know, COVID-19 has greatly impacted Metro North particularly over the last few days. It's also affecting all aspects of our lives as Queenslanders. Today I'd like to address:

- Early holidays for Queensland schools
- Voting this weekend
- More changes to testing criteria

Early holidays for Queensland schools

Today Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk announced that Term 1 school holidays will start a week early, declaring Monday 30 March to Friday 3 April as pupil free days. During this period schools will continue to provide a program of care and supervision for children of essential workers.

As Metro North workforce is an essential workforce, our Metro North parents or guardians will still be able to send their children to school next week. Should you need to consider emergent leave or alternate working arrangements please discuss this with your line manager. You can also get in touch with the COVID-19 HR Hotline on 3647 2819 or email them MetroNorthHR@health.qld.gov.au. There are also plenty of useful, informative resources available on the [COVID-19 QHEPS](#) page.

Voting this weekend

The latest news today is that Queensland's council elections will forge ahead this weekend. Early Voting is available at multiple centres for extended hours tonight across many locations (until 21:00) and tomorrow between 09:00 – 18:00. Early voting locations can be found [here](#).

Telephone voting is available to those in quarantine or self-isolation – with registration required by noon on election day, and voting before 6pm that same day. To check your eligibility and register for telephone voting, phone 1300 912 782 and select option 1. The call centre will be open from 9am to 6pm tomorrow and from 8am to midday on Saturday.

For those of you attending the polls, remember to:

- Bring your own pen or pencil
- Leave 1.5 m between you and others in the queue
- Allow vulnerable electors to go first
- Use hand sanitiser before and after casting your vote

As healthcare workers, we must be exemplars of hand hygiene!

More changes to testing criteria

The CDNA National Guidelines for COVID-19 was further refined overnight to clarify those high-risk settings where there should be a high index of suspicion of COVID-19. High risk settings including First Nations Communities. For those that like to follow closely changes to the guidelines, they are available [here](#).

Wrap Up

Our Metro North Virtual Ward continues to expand its capacity to meet demand. The model is proving to be flexible and scalable, which is reassuring given the challenges that lay ahead for our healthcare system.

Tomorrow is another day, and I look forward to working with an assembled expert team to develop HHS wide guidelines for PPE selection across our wide range of clinical services. The recommendations from this group will be considered by the Metro North Strategic Pandemic Group for adoption.

Kind regards,

Dr Liz Rushbrook

Metro North Health Incident Controller

Metro North HHS – Overview of Cases*

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases				Fever Clinics		
Virtual Ward	Inpatient Ward	Inpatient ICU	Recovered	Number of clinics	Presentations	
					Yesterday	Total
103	19	0	17	6	430	6116

*With effect 0700 26 March 2020