



COVID-19 (Coronavirus)



Message from the Executive Director

MEDICAL SERVICES

Dr Elizabeth Rushbrook

30 March 2020

Dear Colleagues

As the week commences, our response continues to evolve and mature. Today I will update you on:

- Metro North ongoing preparedness
- New Hospital Visitor Direction
- Keeping up with COVID-19 'app'

METRO NORTH PREPAREDNESS

As you heard from our Chief Executive, Shaun Drummond this morning, there has been a very large body of work completed in the last week to ensure we are highly prepared to manage the health of Queenslanders over the coming months during this COVID-19 event.

From expansion of Emergency Departments and stand-up of fever clinics; stand-up of the entirely new capability of the Virtual Ward and Virtual ED, through clearing inpatient beds in and maturing a new model of care in preparation for this novel disease and expanding our ICU capability – it really is a brave new world of healthcare.

Supported by more Nursing and Patient Support Staff; re-allocation of some staff to priority roles using available skillsets and experience; and enhanced collaboration with our Primary Care and Private Hospital partners, the care of Queenslanders is in good hands.

We have also been working to ensure that our staff are working in a safe environment. From enabling social distancing at work through physical modifications and reduced foot traffic; enhanced hand-washing facilities; and continual review of PPE protocols, training and use guides; these initiatives are being rolled out with your safety in mind. Please keep checking our [website for the latest news](#).

HOSPITAL VISITOR

The Chief Health Officer has recently issued a [Hospital Visitors Direction under the Public Health Act 2005](#) to protect the most vulnerable people (our patients). Visitors may not visit (a care and support visit) a hospital if they are unwell, are in self-quarantine or are under the age of 16. There can be no more than one visit a day per patient, by a maximum of two visitors. A carer is allowed for patients who are children, have a disability, are receiving care related to pregnancy, or attending an emergency department or outpatient appointment. There are exemptions for End-of-Life support that are able to be enacted locally.

Metro North will operationalise this directive through our respective Directorate visitor operating procedures and procedures which may be more restrictive in order to allow for effective care of patients at this time.

KEEPING UP WITH COVID-19

The Australian Government has rolled out a new Coronavirus Australia app in iOS and Android and I think it is well worth a look. The app provides information and advice about the coronavirus pandemic, from social distancing measures to the symptoms you should look out for.

There is a tile that allows you to check your symptoms (or that of a loved one) and directs you to a fever clinic or a GP service should you need to be assessed. You can register your isolation, find official Commonwealth updates and easily find the latest advice on protecting yourself, social distancing, personal hygiene and much more. Search for “Coronavirus Australia”.

But don't let the app replace your regular visits to our Metro North [website](#).

Thanks for all of your diligence and ongoing efforts to care for our community and to all your work to 'flatten the curve'.

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
140	20	3	41	6	202	7518

*With effect 1000 30 March 2020

**Metro North has one recorded death