



COVID-19 update 74 – 21/04/2020

I hope you are having a positive and productive week.

I think it's safe to say that we as a health service are enjoying a successful week so far. And for those of you who are superstitious...touch wood. New cases of COVID-19 continue to decline, and the number of recovered patients is growing. This is a tremendous team effort and it makes me incredibly proud to see everyone in the workforce doing their part to reduce the number of infections.

In today's update I want to discuss:

- Restarting category 2 and 5 elective surgeries
- New infection prevention procedure
- Ensuring the wellbeing of staff

Restarting category 2 and 5 elective surgeries

With the number of COVID-19 cases on the decline across Metro North, the decision has been made to restart category two and category five elective surgeries from the 27 April.

Bookings for these surgeries will begin tomorrow. Surgeries will only be booked a week in advance to allow us to ensure we can closely monitor and ensure that we have adequate PPE stocks across Metro North. Gradually restarting elective surgeries will also allow us to continue to adhere to social distancing methods and enable appropriate infection control measures to assist in ensuring the wellbeing of our patients and staff. It will also ensure we are able to meet the clinical requirements of some of the patients who are relying on us for care and who have been patiently waiting for their surgery.

New infection prevention procedure

A new procedure is now available to provide direction on the care of a deceased patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Moving forward, please ensure this procedure is followed so we can maintain the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, patients and communities. This procedure is [hosted on QHEPS](#), a link is also available on our extranet page under [infection prevention](#).

Ensuring the wellbeing of staff

At this time in the week it is important to make sure you and your teams are feeling confident and relatively well rested so that you don't burn out

by the end of the week, whatever day that is. We all know the demand for our health services changes each day, so it is crucial our workforce is feeling ready and motivated to scale up or down as needed.

In an environment where we provide services 24 hours a day, seven days a week and we don't really know what is looming around the corner, it is imperative that you look after your own health and well-being.

I encourage you to visit the Staff Wellbeing page on the [COVID-19 extranet](#) which is full of information to help support the emotional, physical and financial wellbeing of staff. You, our health professionals, are our most important asset. Care for yourself so that you can care for others. Our patients and their families need us, so we need to ensure we are in tip top condition. In addition, make sure you look out for one another. It takes only a minute to ask after a colleague and make sure they are okay. We need to talk to each other and support each other in this unprecedented time.

For my own mental wellbeing, I find it can be useful to keep amusing thoughts or sayings in the back of my mind, especially when facing a tough or unusual challenge at work. I recently saw a quote which I keep referring to during the busier moments throughout this pandemic.



I hope you will think about this if work becomes challenging at any point. I truly believe that while being tested as health professionals in the current COVID-19 environment, it is our time to shine, and I truly believe that this is exactly what is happening. MN is rising to the challenge and while it has been a testing time, it has also been one of great opportunity and we in Metro North have absolutely shown our strengths. Well done to all. Together we are achieving so very much.

To close, I know that you all met George (my fur grandbaby) the weekend before last when I posted his photo with his best buddy Bear. Well this weekend just gone George had an accident and slipped on some damp rocks. He smashed his jaw into a rock and badly chipped one of his teeth. Now as you can see George has a Hollywood

smile so rather than pull his tooth it was decided that George would have a root canal and an attempt to salvage the tooth would be made. So today poor George had his surgery. Needless to say the bill is huge (as vet bills usually are), but George will retain his good looks and cheeky grin...with all his teeth. Seeing his smiling face is one of the best parts of my day, and to have it partially toothless would be just awful. I always feel like anything is paws-ible when George or one of our family dogs are around!



Until tomorrow, stay safe, stay positive and thank you.

Kindest regards,
 Adjunct Professor Alanna Geary
 Metro North Health Incident Controller

Metro North HHS – Overview of Cases*

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases				
Virtual Ward	Inpatient Ward	Inpatient ICU	Recovered	Fever clinic presentations over 24 hours
38	5	4	275	250

*With effect 1000 21 April 2020

**Metro North has three recorded deaths (one person a return traveller into NSW, who passed away in NSW)

*** These numbers reflect the cases being managed by Metro North