



1 April 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As we navigate the current COVID-19 climate I would like to recognise and thank you for the work happening across the health service as we pull together to manage the flow of not only our COVID-19 response, but also the flow of our non-COVID patients. I have been extremely impressed with our ability to pull together and adapt to our new ways of working.

There are hand sanitisers at the entrances to our hospitals for all staff and visitors to use before entering. It is vital that as healthcare workers we are setting an example and willingly using this service and being respectful to this important response initiative.

Elective Surgery Update

Over the past few weeks significant work has been undertaken by staff across the health service to create ICU, ward and staffing capacity to care for anticipated COVID-19 patients. All category 1 urgent surgeries such as cancer-sensitive procedures will continue as usual however this will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

Occupational Violence Desktop Icon

As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, patients are experiencing a heightened sense of anxiety and unfortunately there is potential for this to translate into Occupational Violence. Occupational Violence Incident Response Kits are now available online and can be accessed via the desktop icon. Moving this online will make it easier to support staff following an incident of occupational violence.

Update on Staff Flu Vaccinations

Staff flu vaccines will commence this week with the following provisions:

- Frontline staff will be prioritised and receive theirs first over the next few weeks.
- Non-frontline staff will be able to access the vaccine in the coming weeks after frontline staff. If you are a non-frontline staff member and are concerned about missing out, please seek your vaccination from your local pharmacy, and
- This year we will not be providing contractors or students with flu vaccines.

While the flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID-19, being protected against the seasonal flu will prevent further sick leave and impact on our workforce.

New Restrictions on Social Gatherings

In line with new restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19, non-essential gatherings are limited to two people, with the exemption of families who live under the same roof. While this does not apply to the delivery of our essential care, it will apply to meetings – please ensure you are practicing social distancing and good hand hygiene and I urge you to take advantage of technology available to us for virtual meetings.

Patient Support Services

As we respond to the pandemic, I would like to shine a light on our Patient Support Services and the enormous amount of work they are doing to contribute to our response. I'd particularly like to recognise the team for keeping our facilities clean to an extremely high standard, installing hundreds of hand-sanitising stations, increased cleaning of public high touch points, providing meals, moving patients safely through facilities without cross-infection and keeping our staff and patients safe in a time of increased anxiety.

Without these staff our clinical work would simply be impossible. If you see a member of Patient Support Services around your facility, don't forget to thank them for their work and dedication to the safety of staff and patients not only through COVID-19, but always!



On a personal note, I'd like you to meet Luna – an Easter gift to my grandchildren. She's sure to make #stayingathome much more fun these school holidays!

Please take care of yourself, your families and your colleagues during this time. Keeping an eye on our weekly [Vidcasts](#) is an excellent way to ensure you're receiving the best, up-to-date information.

Regards,

Jackie