



## COVID-19 update 101 – 8/06/2020

Dear colleagues,

Welcome back to another week. Now that we are in Stage 2 of Queensland’s roadmap to easing restrictions, I hope you all enjoyed your weekend in a new, different way! It’s great to see our hard work continue to pay off. Please keep up the good work and continue to be diligent with your hand washing, social distancing, and stay home if you are sick - especially as it gets colder.

Today’s updates include:

- Updates to testing and self-isolation advice
- Virtual services

### Updates to testing and self-isolation advice

There has been some clarification over self-isolation advice for those who present to fever clinics for a COVID-19 test. Previously, anyone receiving a swab was directed to go straight home and self-isolate until otherwise instructed. Now, only those with clinical symptoms are required to self-isolate immediately after a swab.

As outlined in [Public health alert #14](#) on 4 June, the testing criteria is broken down into three categories

#### Essential testing

- Clinical criteria present - Fever ( $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) OR history of fever OR acute respiratory illness).
- AND**
- Epidemiological criteria
    - Close contact; international, interstate or cruise travel.
    - Health, aged or residential care worker with patient contact.
    - Travelled through hotspot(s) or admitted hospital patients with no other cause for their infection evident.

This equals a suspect case of COVID-19 and must isolate until results are available.

#### Enhanced testing

- Clinical criteria only present - Fever ( $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) OR history of fever OR acute respiratory illness).

This does not equal a suspect case of COVID-19. Isolation is NOT required unless clinically appropriate for the patient’s condition.

#### Expanded testing

- All patients presenting to fever clinics, including those with atypical symptom presentations for COVID-19.

Isolation is NOT required unless clinically appropriate for the patient’s condition.

### **Virtual services**

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro North's Virtual Ward service was stood up quickly and efficiently under the leadership of Mary Wheeldon. Of the 327 people treated for COVID-19 at Metro North, 305 had been cared for in a virtual ward environment. This initiative kept hundreds of patients out of hospital beds and has allowed our facilities to continue to safely treat our other inpatients. The governance of virtual care is now sitting under the auspices of Community and Oral Health and we will continue to review and evolve as required to meet the needs of the patients that we care for. For now, our Virtual Ward service is being stood down until there is a need to respond further to COVID-19 cases.

Thank you to everyone who jumped at the chance to create and run our virtual wards. As they say, necessity is the mother of invention. I am expecting our other virtual services, such as Telehealth and the Virtual Emergency Department to grow dramatically by the end of the year. Watch this space!

While COVID-19 has posed many challenges, it has also provided us with opportunity to look at how we do things in the provision of care. We have seen wonderful initiatives commence which have delivered exceptional outcomes so now is the time to think creatively and a little outside the box to ensure we can sustain the momentum and the innovative thinking. Well done to all involved.



It's certainly starting to feel like winter now! George has now moved back to Sydney (with my son) where it's much colder than sunny Queensland. Jacob (my son) assures me he's all rugged up! I must say George looks pretty happy in his hoodie!!!

Make sure you keep warm, stay safe, wash your hands (or paws), and most importantly, stay home if you are sick. Remember to look after yourself physically and emotionally. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health. It is a little easy to become a bit more blasé as restrictions are relaxed and it is also easy to forget that some of our

colleagues may be struggling. Whether it be due to workload pressures, financial hardship or just the pressure of life as it is now, remember to look after you and don't forget to periodically check up on your colleagues. A simple question like, R U OK?, may be all that is required to start a conversation and help someone who is doing it a bit tough. Our employee assistance program Benestar is available for you to reach out to as well. You can find out how to get in touch with them and find about the services they offer on our [Staff Wellbeing site](#). We are all in this together, so let's make sure we all get through these difficult times.

Kind regards,  
 Adjunct Professor Alanna Geary  
 Metro North Incident Commander

**Metro North HHS – Overview of Cases\***

HHS	Patients being managed by HHS					FEVER Clinics				
	Total In-patients			Virtual Ward / HITH / or similar	Deaths **	Total cases managed by HHS (including recovered) ***	# of clinics	Presentations		
	ICU Pts		ICU-NOT Ventilated					ICU-Ventilated	Last 24 hrs	TOTAL^
	ICU-NOT Ventilated	ICU-Ventilated								
MN TOTAL	0	0	0	0	3	324	4	438	25,730	

\*With effect 8 June 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.