



24 August 2020

Dear Colleagues,

It has certainly been an interesting day here across Metro North as we rapidly implement higher levels of precaution against COVID-19 transmission.

Over 1,400 of you tuned into the vidcast this morning with me, the Chief Executive (Shaun Drummond) and the Chief Operating Officer (Jackie Hanson). You asked a number of excellent questions and more than we could manage to answer within the hour. We will continue to address unanswered questions from the morning's vidcasts in our afternoon updates.

Latest update

Overnight, Queensland recorded one new case of COVID-19, bringing the state's total number of active cases to 18. The newest case is linked to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. Metro North currently has one active case being managed in the virtual ward.

This requires us to stay alert and diligently maintain physical distancing and hand hygiene.

Resourcing record attendances at our fever clinics

We have seen a significant increased demand for testing through our fever clinics. Thank you to all the staff who have managed (and continue to manage) this demand expertly. For the next few days, staff (medical, nursing, allied health and administration staff) will be diverted to fever clinics or pop-up clinics support meeting this demand. Thankyou!

Wearing masks

As stated this morning, **all** staff (clinical and non-clinical), visitors, patients, students and contractors are now required to wear masks at all times while on a Metro North premises. Please help those that don't normally wear masks get a good fit, encourage each other to wear them, and wear them well.

All facility EOCs will soon receive posters, an updated guide on how to apply and remove surgical masks safely and a FAQ document to support everyone to wear masks in the workplace.

In the meantime, I'd like to address some of the key questions about mask wearing that we received from staff throughout the day:

- You will be provided with a mask on entry and you are not permitted to bring in your own homemade mask. When you require a replacement, your work area will have sufficient supplies. We are working with areas to ensure an adequate supply chain.
- You are not required to wear a mask if you are in an office on your own, unless someone enters your space.
- You can take your mask off safely and dispose for a meal or drink break. Please wash your hands after removing your mask, and again after you finish eating / drinking then put on a new mask.
- You can remove your mask and replace it if it becomes damaged or wet or if you have worn the mask for more than 4 hours. Please wash your hands after removing your mask.

It is an adjustment to wearing a mask if you have not done so before. I encourage you to 'stick with it' - it does become more comfortable over time. This measure is about doing everything possible to protect ourselves, our patients and visitors.

Vulnerable staff

An updated guide for staff in vulnerable groups will be available this evening. It provides a broad guide for employees and line managers to identify ways to continue to working with suitable adjustments. The [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee statement for managing vulnerable workers](#) and Australian Government Department of Health [Advice for people at risk of coronavirus](#) are also excellent resources to consult. Key changes include reference to this advice, which is becoming increasingly specific in relation to the relative risk of individuals and specific conditions.

Staff working across multiple sites

Working across multiple sites is discouraged at this time. If you can limit your work to one site, or a reduced number of sites, you should do so now. If you cannot limit your work to one site, you must ensure you are very diligent in your application of PPE and adherence to standard and transmission based precautions. Your safety, and the safety of our patients rely on this!

PPE from clinicians

There have been a number of questions around the availability of PPE stock for clinical staff. As Shaun explained this morning, there is sufficient PPE stock for our current status. Please be assured that we are actively monitoring the situation closely to ensure we have a steady, readily available supply. Please use this supply responsibly and with diligence.

Visitors

The latest [Hospital Visitor Direction](#) has significantly limited the number of people coming to our facilities. Visitors are not permitted to enter Metro North facilities (which are all restricted hospitals) unless they are providing end-of-life care support, supporting a patient admitted for maternity care or if they are a parent or guardian of a patient under 18 years of age. Executive Directors of each Directorate may also approve visitors if they believe the visit is necessary for emergency or other compassionate grounds. Please refer any case that you believe meets this category through your supervisor to your EOC.

Updated collateral including posters and patient information sheets about these visitor restrictions will be sent through to facility EOCs tomorrow.

Over the weekend, EOCs were provided with material to support a new online system where visitors can register their details using their mobile phones. This is to ensure we are taking all the reasonable steps required to prevent anyone with COVID-19 entering our facility.

We will be providing additional materials to support staff who do not have an swipe pass to register their attendance at work online in coming days.

After a big day, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone for your patience, cooperation and flexibility as we navigate this new territory.

Kind regards,
 Dr Elizabeth Rushbrook
 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	1	3	342	5	1351	68,992 (2.7% A&TSI)	

*With effect 24 August 2020, 1000

**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.