



Dear Colleagues,

The recent COVID-19 cluster linked to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre requires us all to step up and be alert. This morning we have been advised by the Queensland Chief Health Officer of the need to escalate to a higher level of precaution against COVID-19 transmission in all acute hospitals. In Metro North, this is how we are responding to this request to ensure the safety of our staff, patients and visitors:

### **Wearing masks**

Until further notice, Metro North will require **all** staff (clinical and non-clinical), visitors and patients to wear masks and use COVID-19 transmission based precautions consistent with the CHO endorsed guideline for moderate risk.

This means that today we will be implementing the wearing of flat surgical face masks. All masks will be provided to staff on arrival (at designated staff entry sites) and will also be available in local work areas. We will implement this throughout today by making surgical masks available to all staff. The distribution of masks will be prioritised to clinical areas first and then into other areas. More information and guidance will be provided throughout the day.

Masks must be:

- Worn properly - covering the nose and mouth - at all times.
- The darker coloured side should face outward.
- The mask will need to be removed for meal breaks and once removed, should be disposed of and replaced with a new mask.
- Staff must wear surgical masks and cannot wear homemade masks while in the workplace.

When staff are in open plan offices, regardless of where they are, they must wear a mask. When in a private office, it is satisfactory for you not to have a mask on. However if people come to your office, both you and your guests must wear a mask. Guidance as to how to wear a mask is available [here](#).

This change is to allow us to continue to deliver essential healthcare to the community AND ensure the necessary safety for our patients, our peers and ourselves.

### **Managing onsite staff numbers**

Within the next 24 hours and at least for this week, we also recommend that managers and supervisors review onsite staff work practices. It is recommended that where safe to do so, practices to reduce the number of people in the office at the same time should be adopted - effectively reducing to number onsite at any one time to around 50%.

Options to achieve this include staggered start times and enabling work from home arrangements on some working days where appropriate. More guidance will be provided throughout the day.

In addition, worker risk assessment should be undertaken to ensure that COVID safe practices are maximised and individualised where appropriate.

**Training and meetings**

All non-essential training is to stop for this week. Where clinical training is essential, screening must be undertaken and masks (and other PPE if required) must be worn.

All non-essential meetings are to cease. Essential meetings are to be undertaken using teams.

Staff are reminded to minimise their movement between sites in the HHS and if they do need to attend another site, they must abide by the COVID safe requirements of that site and wear a mask.

Thanks for your patience and cooperation. Remember, we have got this!

Kind regards,  
Alanna Geary and Elizabeth Rushbrook  
Metro North Incident Commander