



25 August 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Some good news overnight. Queensland recorded no additional cases of COVID-19, despite record numbers of people presenting for tests. But as the CHO stated today, the next ten days are absolutely critical, and we need to remain vigilant during this period and come forward for testing if you have any symptoms whatsoever.

New fever clinic

Thanks to our amazing Community and Oral Health team and staff working behind the scenes from the Metro North and Redcliffe EOC, we have established a new Community Assessment Centre today at the Redcliffe Showground, entry via Portwood Street. This will allow us to manage higher volumes of people who present for testing moving forward. The Community Assessment Centre is open from 8am to 4pm on weekdays and no GP referral is required.

Resources for mask wearing

Today we provided facility EOCs with a number of resources to support staff to appropriately wear masks and to remind staff, patients and visitor of the requirement to wear masks in our facilities. You can now find a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document, [posters for staff, patients and visitors](#) and a [step-by-step guide](#) for applying and removing your mask online. Updated Clinical Practice Guidelines for mask and face shield wearing will be available on the Metro North COVID-19 extranet in the morning.

Please familiarise yourself with these resources and share them with your colleagues.

I know that wearing a mask is unfamiliar for a lot of our staff, particularly for so long. Please support each other to fit and wear masks correctly and encourage frequent breaks for food and hydration.

Some additional tips and tricks include:

- Fit your mask snugly, not too tight. It should not be so tight that it 'hurts';
- For earloop masks, a 'headband with buttons' or and 'ear saver strap' can pull the earloops away from the back of your ears, relieving a possible pressure point;
- For earloop masks that are loose, simply twist the earloop before you fit it around your ear to make the mask fit tighter;
- For earloop masks, a piece of folded tissue between the strap and your ear can provide some cushioning.

Masks for patients

Just like staff and visitors, patients are required to wear masks at all times when transiting in the hospital. If they are in their bed or bed space, (for example, the chair next to their bed), patients are not required to wear masks, unless clinically indicated. Patients should be provided with a surgical mask. Visitors can choose to wear their own, clean fabric mask (with at least 3 layers) to the facility if they wish.

Mask supply

A process is now in place to facilitate a one-week supply of masks for work units in Block 7, Block 6 and Clinical Skills Development Centre on the Herston Campus.

Today was the first day of our concierge service at Block 7, where non-clinical staff were provided with masks and supported to apply them properly on arrival. This service will continue daily from 7am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Additional masks can be sourced from reception on level 14, Block 7, between the hours of 10am to 12noon and a mask order form must be completed by each work area to receive the one-week supply.

All Directorates/facilities will have their own processes for ordering and supplying masks, as well as Citilink and Rosemount, where a process is currently in development. For more information contact EOC-MetroNorth, attention Logistics.

Thank you to everyone who showed cooperation and good cheer this morning upon arriving to work. I'd like to remind you of the importance for kindness when engaging with our concierge team who are doing their best to keep you safe.

Vulnerable workers

I mentioned in this morning's vidcast, our facilities are reviewing the plans we have in place for all of our workers, including those people who might be considered vulnerable. Today we distributed an updated guidance note for vulnerable staff, which can also be found on our [COVID-19 extranet page](#).

This advice has changed over time. There is more research and evidence available about who are the most vulnerable people and how to best support those people with individualised plans. Please familiarise yourself with the latest guidance and how it may apply to you.

I would like to be clear that there is no need to make drastic changes to the way you work at this stage. However, it is the time to think ahead and have the right plans in place to respond to the possibility of increased and sustained community transmission. Strategies like staggered start and finish times and controlling high traffic areas like 'tea rooms' or 'break out areas' can be enabled to help manage the numbers of staff onsite.

Vidcasts

You are encouraged to continue attending the daily vidcast from 11am – 12pm. It is a good chance for you to keep up to date with the latest information and to ask questions (your questions keep me on my toes!). You can also check back in later for the recording if you miss the vidcast session. See the recording of today's vidcast [here](#).

Take care this evening.
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-VENTILATED					Last 24 hrs	TOTAL^
	ICU-NOT VENTILATED	ICU-VENTILATED							
MN TOTAL	0	0	0	1	3	342	5	1991	70,983

*With effect 25 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.