



**28 August 2020**

Dear colleagues,

Overnight, Queensland recorded an additional three cases related to the Queensland Corrective Services Academy.

Two of those people live on the Gold Coast and the other person lives in Forrest Lake. There are now 15 cases linked to the original Brisbane Youth Detention Centre cluster, which takes Queensland's total number of active cases to 20.

There is work to be done to identify the places these people have been and their close contacts. Please stay up to date with the list of venues frequently updated on the [Queensland Health website](#).

We are prepared to act swiftly if cases emerge in the Metro North catchment over the weekend. The MN EOC will be staffed and ready to act if necessary but we are hopeful that we will have a quieter weekend than last.

### **Extended restrictions to the Gold Coast**

As a result of these new cases, the [restrictions](#) that currently apply to us in Metro North, and other Local Government Areas, will be extended to the Gold Coast as of 8am tomorrow.

This means that the Gold Coast area will now be subject to the same [movement and gathering restrictions](#), [hospital visitor directions](#) and [extra restrictions in aged care facilities](#) and the enhanced use of PPE supplies. This may impact some of you who live or spend time in this area, so please familiarise yourself with these requirements.

### **Thank you for wearing your masks**

You have all done an incredible job this week adapting to the universal mask wearing directive. I know it's been a challenge; it can be uncomfortable at times. We are taking this very precautionary approach because we care about your safety, our patients and visitors and because it's based on the current expert health advice. While there is an unknown period of community transmission, this protective mechanism is what is required of us all.

Rest assured, if this no longer becomes a requirement, we will keep you updated and let you resume snacking freely at your desk. Until then, let's keep pulling together as a team, and rising to new challenges and ways of working (and eating and drinking) like the champions we are!

I know a lot of you are finding this difficult, but please remember this is no reason to act with disrespect when engaging with our concierge service. They are volunteering because they care about you and the safety of our workplace.

Even this AFL footballer is getting in the spirit of mask wearing! Maybe, just maybe, if we promote the AFL we might get the grand final in Queensland! At this rate, everyone may be in masks, including the players, but it would be nice to at least host one AFL grand final in our lifetime in Queensland.



A **special vidcast** will be hosted on Tuesday at 11am with our Metro North Infection Control, Assistant Nursing Director - Catherine Watson and an experienced mask wearer Anna Dunne, Acting Nurse Manager – Operating Theatres RBWH, who will take you through some practical tips and tricks to make the experience a little more comfortable. People with glasses, tune in! I know I will be.

### **Wait time for test results**

We continue to experience delays in response to high volumes of testing. As we go into the weekend, keep in mind that if you or your loved ones require a test, it is currently taking 2-3 days to get the result, depending on the provider. The incredible staff are working around the clock to return test results around as quickly as possible. What a job they have on their hands!

### **Managing onsite numbers**

As much as possible we are trying to reduce the numbers of staff who are in office spaces. Where staff are in a shared office it is recommended that we reduce this number to approximately 50%. This means that if it is possible for staff to work effectively at home, then please discuss with your line manager. The decisions will be very much made on what works best as a team and every work unit is different so will need to be considered individually.

### **Public information for visitors to Metro North facilities**

Information about the latest visitor restrictions is updated to the [Metro North website](#) and all [facility home pages](#) and [visitor information pages](#) (RBWH linked as an example). Switchboard staff are provided with resources to answer questions on visitor restrictions, in line with the current advice. In addition to this, posters are distributed with the current advice for visitors.

Our facilities are accepting some special exemptions for visitors at the discretion of the Executive Director. Thank you to the treating teams who have been working compassionately with our patients and their loved ones to progress these requests through to your EOCs. You are doing such a great job navigating these complex situations.

### **Advice if you visited the same site as a positive case**

This has been a recurring theme in our vidcasts this week, so let me provide some extra clarification.

If you have visited any of the listed [locations](#), you are required to stay alert and monitor your symptoms. If you become unwell, or you are considered a direct contact and contacted by the Public Health Unit, you must come forward for testing. If you are not unwell, you can continue your normal activities, but please remain alert to any symptoms.

### **Students in Emergency Departments**

By mid-next week we hope to review the restrictions regarding students in Emergency Departments. Currently, students are not permitted in our EDs and in community-based home care. We are meeting daily as a MN Executive so that we can be agile and review these decisions. As soon as we can, we will be assisting students to be back in these very important areas.

### **What to do if a member of your household is tested**

Earlier in the week, we were erring on the side of caution about what you should do if a member of your household was tested. As a result of the low level of community transmission linked to the current cluster, it is currently deemed safe and appropriate to come to work, as long as you are not symptomatic. If you are of course symptomatic, please stay home and get tested.

### **COVID-19 related leave provisions**

There were a number of questions on this morning's vidcast around COVID-19 related leave. To answer one of the key questions, if you are waiting for your result, please apply for special leave. If your test comes back negative but you are still unwell, please use normal sick leave. The [COVID-19 leave provisions](#) document is your go-to for all leave related questions. This is being constantly reviewed and updated.

### **Support your local concierge service**

Our facilities are doing a phenomenal job of supporting concierge services to guide staff, patients and visitors with new restrictions, and registration requirements.

If you have capacity, I encourage you to volunteer with your local concierge team. Check in with your line manager to see how you can help. It really is a great way of learning more about the people we help in our community and getting a greater appreciation for the awesome work we do. Plus, you get the chance to put a smile (hidden behind a mask) on a patient's or visitor's face. There's no better feeling!

### **Change to vidcasts**

Our vidcasts will be at the same time over the weekend (11am – 12md) and updated online each day. Check in over the weekend if you are at work.

As of next week, our regular vidcasts will be reduced to Monday, Wednesday and Friday only. The vidcasts will be with the Chief Executive and/or the Chief Operating Officer and the Incident Commander. Don't forget about our special mask wearing vidcast on Tuesday.

### **Please! Stay home if you're unwell**

As we head into the weekend, I really cannot stress this enough. If you are unwell, with any symptoms, no matter how mild, please get stay home and only leave home if you are getting a test.

It's a shift in how many of us think and act. It's hard to feel like you may be letting your team down, but trust me on this one, you are not! The best way you can support us as Metro North, your team and your colleagues, is to stay home if you are feeling unwell. Do not soldier on. Please look after yourself first and in doing that you will be supporting your team members. Your line manager and your colleagues will support you on this decision.

**A bit of perspective**

With the news of additional cases, it is important to put our situation into a global context. While we are seeing cases, we are in a very different position to other places in the world. Countries in Europe are still recording very high numbers of positive cases every single day, as well as the US and UK. Just know, we are doing such a great job! The steps we have taken, while difficult, are saving lives and have saved lives.

For those of you with a weekend ahead of you, please enjoy. I know I will. Thank you for being part of this phenomenal team. We are 22, 000 people strong! What a force we are – there's nothing that will stand in our way.

Kind regards,  
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	0	0	0	0	3	342	5	921	74,761	
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	3	342	5	921	74,761	

\*With effect 28 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.