



## COVID-19 update 144 – 2/09/2020

Dear colleagues,

Queensland has recorded two more cases of COVID-19 in Queensland in the last 24 hours, bringing our State's total of active cases to 28. These cases are linked to existing known cases which means that community transmission remains low, but not impossible. Please keep up the good work with measures to prevent the spread, including hand washing, staying home when you're sick, physical distancing and wearing your mask at work and in busy places.

Today, Chief Operating Officer Jackie Hanson and I answered many of your questions on a [vidcast which is now available online](#) if you missed it.

### Testing and wait times for results

Last week we were experiencing an increased turn-around time for COVID-19 tests due to high volumes of testing. In the past few days, we have seen a steady decrease of presentations at our fever clinics across the board at Metro North meaning that our hard working lab staff were able to catch up on the testing. It is pleasing to see that we have now returned to turn around time in 24-36 hours. Thank you to everyone who was working hard to meet the demand for testing – the work is multi-faceted and involves admin staff, clinicians and support services staff!

### Special leave

The [COVID-19 Guide to Leave Provisions](#) document has been updated for the month of September. If you are wanting to find out more information on sick leave, isolation special leave, special pandemic leave or more, please take the time to look at the document.

### Wearing masks and PPE

Welcome to the new norm! I'm sure I'm not the only one who has gotten used to wearing a mask all day at work, and I hope many of you are also adjusting comfortably to this recent requirement. If you still have questions wearing masks, please read through the [FAQ sheet](#) that has been prepared to help you. Here are a few additional things you should know:

- You must always be wearing your mask unless eating or drinking. If you are walking between buildings on campus, please keep your mask on.
- It is okay to be walking to work without a mask as you make your way to a mask collection station first thing when you get to work.
- After removing your mask for eating or drinking, you need to wash your hands and apply a new mask on completion.

[Donning and doffing PPE](#) is incredibly important to get right. Doffing, in particular, should be paid particular attention – removing PPE in the right order, regular hand washing and disposing of it properly are vital steps in spreading infectious diseases. Avoid the temptation to touch your face before washing your hands!!!

### Support persons for people attending an appointment

Many of you are familiar with the latest [Hospital Visitors Direction No.6](#) and have been supporting our patients to connect with their loved ones virtually. Thank you.

For people attending outpatient appointments who require support, necessary support persons can attend this appointment with them using the provision of '*other compassionate grounds*'. Examples include carers for people with impairment or disability or a family member that is an interpreter. Contracted interpreter services are considered staff and able to attend for interpreter services.

If you are unsure if a visitor is allowed, please escalate the question to your Directorate EOC who will be happy to help.



Please remember to stay home if you're sick! Even if you receive a negative test result after your swab, stay home until you are free from any flu-like symptoms. COVID-19 is not the only infectious disease we are vulnerable to!

Kind regards,  
 Dr Liz 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	0	3	342	6	1,013	79,278	

\*With effect 2 September 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.