



Dear colleagues,

Today the Chief Health Officer announced a lifting of some restrictions in the Brisbane Metro and West Moreton areas after Queensland reached 14 days of no community transmission. Firstly, I would like to say well done! As Queenslanders, we've worked together to keep each other safe and you should all be proud of contributing to this success. Although we are not out of the woods entirely, it's nice to celebrate this small yet significant win.

Secondly, I wanted to provide clarification around the CHO's announcement as it impacts the way we operate as a Hospital and Health Service.

- Changes to visitor restrictions
- Changes to PPE Requirements
- Students in Emergency Departments
- Border changes
- Travellers from previous hotspots
- Other updates

Changes to visitor restrictions

Today the CHO announced that as of 1 am tomorrow 25 September 2020, Brisbane will no longer be classified as a restricted local government area. What this means is that we can now return to the [Hospital Visitors Direction \(No. 6\)](#) which allows:

- A maximum of two visitors may visit a patient at one time, at any time within a facility's visiting hours, for any length of time.
 - Example: A pregnant patient's partner and the patient's support person may visit at the same time during the patient's labour.
- For end of life visits, more than two visitors may visit a patient at one time.
 - Note - all visitors remain subject to each hospital's clinical guidelines for COVID-19. These clinical guidelines may be more restrictive than this direction, for example, in relation to the number and type of visitors.

The Metro North Strategic Executive Team (SET) will meet tomorrow morning to discuss what these changes mean for facilities across Metro North. These discussions will include:

- The continuation of concierge services (signing in and out)

As soon as we finalise the new visitor policy for Metro North, we will provide an update.

Changes to increased requirement of PPE

As of 1 am Friday, we will resume to normal use of PPE – this means that you are not required to wear a mask if you are in a clinical setting, but only if required to do so as per your normal work duties and in keeping with Standard Precautions and Infection Control practice. You can continue to wear a mask if you choose, but you must wear those supplied by Metro North. Please do not bring in your own masks from home. Visitors will be

permitted to wear a mask of their own if they choose to do so. This change can go ahead as of 1 am tomorrow.

As you know there was an additional level of PPE requirement for Emergency Departments and community home visiting. Please know that the PPE restrictions are now the same as all other clinical units and there will be no longer a requirement for additional PPE.

Students in Emergency Departments

Students may return to Emergency Departments from Monday 28 September 2020. The same requirements for PPE will be in place for them as is for all other staff in the department.

Border changes

As of yesterday, the [Border Direction](#) will now:

- allow New South Wales border zone residents to travel anywhere in Queensland for informal shared parenting arrangements, without quarantining. Similarly, Queensland residents can travel to the New South Wales border zone for this purpose and re-enter Queensland without quarantining
- introduce a new 'H' category for the border declaration pass for people coming to Queensland for day health appointments
- make the use of the [approved Queensland Health approved essential health care form](#) mandatory for private health practitioners providing health care to people entering Queensland from hotspots.

Travellers from previous hotspots

Anyone may enter Queensland from a place that is no longer a declared COVID-19 hotspot. You can enter Queensland even if you have been in a previously declared COVID-19 hotspot in the last 14 days. The Australian Capital Territory is planned to no longer be a hotspot from 1 am 25 September.

Other updates

- Gatherings of 30 people in public and at home will be allowed after tomorrow at 1am too.
- The Australian Government announced an [extension](#) of the temporary telehealth and phone consultation (COVID-19) MBS item numbers. These item numbers will be extended until the 31 March 2021.

While we are enjoying some proposed relaxation of our restrictions and life is returning to a little bit more of a normal state, it is easy to forget that some of our colleagues and our patients may still be struggling. Remember RUOK are the three little words that can make someone's day. Ask it of your colleagues often and I would hope that those words may start a helpful and meaningful conversation. So simple but could make such a difference.

And finally, I'd like to say thank you for everyone who continues to work as we manage the pandemic. From those who are cleaning surfaces more regularly to those taking swabs, to our frontline staff and our executives, you are all part of what makes Metro North work like clockwork! Let's keep being the biggest, best and nicest hospital and health service!!!

If there are any further changes or you feel there is any further clarification required, you will hear from Mark Butterworth tomorrow.

Kind regards,
 Alanna Geary
 Metro North Incident Controller

Current MN Response Tier Activated – [Tier Two minus](#)

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 24hrs	TOTAL ^
MN TOTAL	0	0	0	1	3	343	5	411	90,517	

*With effect 24 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.