



19 March 2021

Dear colleagues,

Cessation of restricted areas

Our Hospitals, Residential Aged Care Facilities and Disability Support Facilities that have been operating under the [declared restricted area](#) guidelines since Saturday 13 March will **step down from this today at midday**. Concurrently, our Directorates will return to adopt the *Low risk* stance for [PPE Escalation](#) as found in the *Pandemic Response Guideline: Personal protective equipment in Healthcare delivery*.

This means that enhanced concierge and wider mask wearing is no longer required. We are also able to welcome visitors into our hospitals, residential aged care facilities and disability support facilities.

Whilst it is sometimes hard to remember that we are still in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, please remember that the usual baseline transmission based and COVID-19 infection control precautions remain in place. It is our careful and diligent application of these precautions that keep you safe in the workplace.

I can't stress enough that it is vitally important to maintain excellent hand hygiene and physical distancing wherever possible to help protect yourself, your family and all Queenslanders.

Vaccination numbers

A big thank you to everyone who has taken the opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccine to date.

Phase 1a staff clinics are now operating at STARS, RBWH, TPCH, Redcliffe Hospital, Caboolture Hospital and COH (Brighton Health Campus).

We are now vaccinating more than 1000 people per day across Metro North (yesterday we vaccinated 1135 people), which is a remarkable achievement! To support the Australian and Queensland vaccination effort, we are working at ways to increase this even further – watch this space!!!

From next week, our online booking system will be live which will make it easier to schedule COVID vaccination appointments at any one of our Directorates.

Whilst any staff member that has direct patient contact can currently book/presented for vaccination, noting that priority will be given to Phase 1a staff who present.

Phase 1b rollout

The definition for Phase 1a staff has been expanded to include staff with possible clinical contact into high-risk areas, such as staff that undertake periodic or on-call services to support respiratory / infectious disease / emergency department services.

As we progress towards completion of vaccination for Phase 1a staff, there will be a 'cusp' period from between Thursday 25 March until Thursday 1 April where we may be able to start vaccinating some high-priority Phase 1b recipients.

Phase 1b vaccinations are anticipated to formally start in earnest on Tuesday 6 April - this will see the large scale vaccination of all of our staff and high risk patients.

Important information regarding rare adverse events following vaccination

There is good and expanding evidence that both Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines are safe and effective! That being said - we continue to monitor carefully and treat for all adverse events as they occur.

A reminder that the minimum observation time for staff receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is 15 minutes. Staff that have a history of severe allergy or anaphylaxis will be observed for at least 30 minutes after receiving the vaccination.

Bare below the elbow

Finally, a reminder that vaccine providers should be bare below the elbow. This is an essential part of aseptic technique.

Have a lovely weekend.

Dr Liz Rushbrook
Metro North Incident Controller

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	25	0	0	0	3	480	5	234	150,005

- As at 19/3/2021 1200