



26 March 2021

Dear colleagues,

This morning the Chief Health Officer has announced a case of community transmission of COVID-19 in Brisbane. The patient is currently being expertly cared for by Metro North and the contact tracing is well underway.

Greater Brisbane and Moreton Bay Region have been declared restricted areas. This will apply for the [Aged Care](#), [Disability Accommodation Services](#) and [Hospital Visitors](#) Directions. I expect this will be in place until at least early next week.

In addition, we will move immediately to Moderate Risk in accordance with the [PPE Escalation matrix](#) within the [Pandemic Response Guideline: Personal protective equipment in Healthcare delivery](#). Again, I expect this will be in place until at least early next week.

The Chief Health Officer is also requesting all persons in the Brisbane and Moreton Local Government Areas to wear masks when in places where physical distancing is unable to be maintained (e.g. in supermarkets, in shopping centres, when entering large entertainment venues). Please make sure you always have a mask on you in case you find yourself in a crowded place.

These measures will allow comprehensive contact tracing to be completed in order to keep Queenslanders safe. Contact tracing will be reflected in the Queensland Government active [contact tracing alerts website](#). Please watch these alerts carefully over today and the coming days. Anyone who has been to the venues identified should get tested as soon as possible, even if you have no symptoms.

Without exception, **anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild, should be tested and isolate until they get a negative result.**

In response, we are stepping up our testing capacity – with all of our fever clinics with increased capacity and extended operating hours. We are also now ready to open our new low acuity COVID-19 ward at the RBWH later today so that we can safely support people who are confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Separately, the COVID-19 vaccination program will continue. All staff will be required to wear masks and goggles, with vaccinees required to wear masks and physically distance where practicable.

Personal protective equipment changes

Moderate Risk in the [Pandemic Response Guidance – Personal protective equipment in Healthcare delivery](#) means that:

- All visitors are to wear a surgical mask
- All non-COVID-19 patients (excluding paediatric patients) are to wear a surgical mask where tolerated, unless an inpatient in their own bed
- All suspected / probable / confirmed COVID-19 patients (excluding paediatric patients) are to wear a surgical mask where tolerated, unless an inpatient in their own bed
- All Hospital staff undertaking activities other than patient care are to wear a surgical mask
- All Hospital staff undertaking routine care and Aerosol generating procedures of non-COVID-19 patients (within 1.5m) are to wear a surgical mask and protective eyewear
- All Hospital staff undertaking routine care of suspected / probably / confirmed COVID-19 patients are to wear a surgical mask, protective eyewear, gown and gloved
- All Hospital staff undertaking Aerosol generating procedures for suspected / probable / confirmed COVID-19 patients are to wear a P2/N95 respirator, protective eyewear, gown and gloves.

These requirements also apply to outreach and 'in the home' services provided to Metro North.

Hospital Visitor Restrictions

In accordance with the requirements of operating within a restricted area, we are enacting the required visitor restrictions at the direction of the Chief Health Officer, which means that visitors to hospital are restricted to the following scenarios:

- One parent or carer of a patient of the hospital who is a child;
- One carer of a patient of the hospital who is being provided pregnancy or maternity related care (NB: up to two may be allowed for emergency or other compassionate grounds on a case-by-case basis);
- One carer of a patient of the hospital who has a disability and requires support from a disability support worker or an informal carer;
- Visitors for a patient of the hospital who is receiving end of life care (up to a limit imposed by the operator of the hospital – generally 2 persons at any one time);
- Visitors to a patient of the hospital for emergency or other compassionate grounds (e.g. intensive care, emergency department) – (up to a limit imposed by the operator of the hospital – generally 1 person per day for approximately 2 hours)

The operator of the hospital (The Executive Director or delegate – e.g. Duty Nurse Manager, Ward NUM), can determine exceptional circumstances where visitors will be allowed. Any visitors (other than patients of the hospital) are required to register their attendance with the QR code or at the concierge. Staff are required to tap their ID card on entrance into Directorates.

There is no restriction for students attending our hospitals or facilities during this time – although students will be required to comply with all personal protective equipment requirements.

The recommended signage for hospitals includes [STOP No Visitors](#) and [STOP Restrictions on entry](#).

Residential Aged Care / Disability Care Facility Changes

Similarly, there are now restrictions enacted at Residential Aged Care Facilities and Disability Accommodation Services – this limits attendance at these facilities and requires staff and visitors to wear masks.

I am very confident that we are prepared to safely and calmly respond to this scenario. I look forward to working with you this weekend and thank you all for your support to implement our response.

Regards,

Dr Liz Rushbrook
Metro North Incident Controller