



UPDATE FROM THE COVID-19 HEALTH INCIDENT CONTROLLER

Metro North Health

18 December 2021

Dear colleagues,

Today there were 24 new locally acquired cases of COVID-19 in Queensland and five new interstate acquired cases. With this comes a significant number of exposure venues across Queensland, so I urge you all to check the [Queensland Health contact tracing website](#) each day.

Several of the new cases have been detected in the healthcare sector including visitors, patients and/or staff of some of our own facilities. This situation is as expected, and one that we have been planning for since the pandemic began early last year. Many of our staff and patients may become close contacts over the coming days and weeks, so we need to activate and follow the relevant COVID-19 response plans and outbreak plans when this happens. These are all available on our [COVID-19 extranet site](#).

Move to Tier 2 (minus)

Metro North Health will now move to [Tier 2](#) (minus) of our [COVID-19 response plan](#) due to the moderate community transmission we are seeing. **Please note that at this time we are not cancelling any planned care delivery.** Please familiarise yourselves with the Tier 2 requirements which have been implemented across the health service, noting that the current documentation is currently being updated to reflect the broader high level protections and restrictions in place (i.e. moderate-risk PPE, visitor restrictions, mask use etc).

Key changes include:

- Governance: We will have a Metro North COVID IMT daily
- Personnel:
 - All personnel should work as per Moderate-Risk PPE (see page 9 for the matrix)
 - Vaccinated students can remain in the workplace
- Meetings:
 - All meetings should be moved to virtual if possible

Non-essential meetings should be suspended

- Training:

Non-essential training should be suspended

Orientation moved to online

- Clinical Services:

Planned care services can continue

Maximise virtual care where possible (e.g. outpatients)

Elective surgery and procedures can continue as booked

Updated PPE risk matrix

Overnight the PPE risk matrix was updated following changes to the border restrictions. Those with epidemiological evidence, with or without clinical evidence, are to be managed using additional precautions. This means that those who have been in a hotspot who are vaccinated must be managed using additional precautions until after they have had a negative test result for COVID-19 on day 5 after leaving the hotspot.

Effective 3pm 17 December 2021, we have moved to **moderate PPE risk level**. Please familiarise yourself with the updated matrixes:

- [Personal protective equipment in healthcare delivery, community health and in-home care settings, correctional services](#) (Hint: see page 9)
- [Personal protective equipment in residential aged care and disability accommodation services](#)

COVID care

Our COVID wards are ready for the increase in patients we are about to see. We have an expansion plan ready, and we have stood up the virtual ward to care for well COVID-19 patients.

We have expanded testing and vaccination services to meet demand.

We are also working with Queensland Health to stand up a COVID-19 hotel for well COVID-19 patients who are not able to isolate in their own home.

Clarification of Entry into Queensland requirements (Border Restrictions Direction)

Overnight there has been some clarification about who can enter Queensland. Specifically, it notes that close contacts and interstate exposure venues can be notified by SMS or other means in addition to publication on the website – and these people cannot enter Queensland if they are required to quarantine for any of these reasons.

Our biggest job now is to stay calm and work well. We have been planning for this for 20 months. We know how to manage this. We've got this!

Regards,
 Dr Liz Rushbrook
 Metro North Chief Medical Officer

Helpful links

- [Upload evidence of your vaccine](#)
- [Qld Health contact tracing list](#)
- [Register for your vaccine](#)
- [Qld Health general COVID-19 page](#)
- [Metro North COVID-19 extranet](#)
- [COVID vidcast recordings on QHEPS](#)

Metro North Health – overview of cases*

HHS	Patients managed by HHS					Fever clinics			
	Total in-patients			Virtual ward/ HITH/ similar	Deaths**	Total cases (inc. recovered) ***	No. of clinics	Presentations	
	19	ICU patients						Yesterday	Total^
		ICU not ventilated	ICU ventilated						
MN total		0	0	0	4	862	4	845	262268

*As at 18/12/21

**Metro North Health has four recorded deaths (one person a return traveller into NSW, who passed away in NSW)

*** These numbers reflect the cases being managed by Metro North Health.