



10 February 2022

Dear colleagues,

- Thank you
- Skin injury and PPE
- Close contacts
- Vaccination pop ups
- Hospital Entry – returning from overseas
- Staff PCR and RAT services
- Fit testing and fit checking

Thank you

For the past two years we have had a dedicated workforce of staff who have been deployed to various frontline services as part of our COVID response.

These staff have guided travellers at the airport, cared for people in quarantine, responded to outbreaks such as the Indooroopilly cluster, and staffed our vaccination and testing sites. With high vaccination rates and international entry requirements eased, many of these services have been closed or wound back.



Pictured are some of the team from the RBWH Education Centre staff testing site which is closing tomorrow.

I'd like to sincerely thank the many people who have been the public face of our COVID response, dealing with people who often haven't appreciated the vital role these teams have played in protecting Queenslanders from the worst of the pandemic.

Skin injury and PPE

Queensland Health has released *Facial injury and respiratory protective equipment guidance* which includes how to use a dressing under PPE for staff who have a mask-related skin injury or condition.

Under the guidelines, a thin hydrocolloid dressing or a foam dressing may be used for pressure related issues. Fit testing must be repeated with the dressing in place and a fit check must be done every time a fitted mask is donned.

The guidelines also recommend any moisturisers or barrier creams should be applied at least 30 minutes before wearing PPE to allow time to fully dry. It also provides advice on how to protect your skin while wearing PPE.

This guidance has also been added to the *Infection prevention and control guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings*.

Close contacts

There was a question in today's vidcast about what evidence staff need to provide as a close contact of a COVID-positive household member in order for work from home arrangements to be put in place or Special Discretionary Leave with Pay to be approved by the relevant delegate.

In general, the delegate and line manager must be satisfied that the absence is legitimate, which can be done through a verbal discussion with the employee; with a medical certificate if they see a GP; or by provision of other evidence if required. In many cases, evidence would include copies of pathology or RAT results or similar.

Delegates, line managers and staff who are unsure about the evidence required in specific circumstances should speak to their local HR team for advice.

Vaccination pop ups

We are holding vaccination pop up clinics over the next month at schools and community events.

This Sunday 13 February and next Sunday 20 February there will be pop ups at the Caboolture Showgrounds (Gamgee building) from 9am to 3pm, coinciding with the Caboolture Markets and Jurassic Creatures events.

From Monday 14 February our school pop ups will continue at primary schools on weekdays and at high schools on weekends. The first two will be Kallangur State School and Mango Hill State School next Monday and Tuesday from 2.30pm-6.00pm.

Find your nearest vaccination centre on the Queensland Health website.

Hospital Entry – returning from overseas

The [*Hospital Entry Direction \(No.11\)*](#) was updated over the weekend, to allow exemptions to be considered for hospital staff returning from overseas.

You must apply for an exemption via the Queensland Health exemptions portal.

To do make your return to work easier, please follow these steps:

1. Submit your exemption request via the [Queensland Government exemptions](#) portal.
2. Choose the '**General exemption from a health direction**' option (do not choose 'specialist/essential worker')
3. Email the details of your request and your application reference number (RITM) to your directorate EOC, including your proposed return to work date. This will be provided to Metro North EOC.
4. Metro North EOC will liaise with Health Directions and communicate the application outcome as soon as it is known.

Staff PCR and RAT services

The RBWH Education Centre staff PCR testing site is moving to the public RNA Showgrounds site this week.

Each directorate will be managing RAT distribution for their staff. You can collect a RAT kit from the Metro North staff collection site closest to your home if needed.

- **Community & Oral Health** – Brighton Wellness Hub, 19th Avenue Brighton, Monday to Friday 2pm-4pm. Asymptomatic close contact staff only. RAT collection only. Contact EOC-COH outside these hours.
- **TPCH** – Outpatients B, 7 days 8am-12pm. RAT and PCR available. Staff can also attend the public fever clinic at Building 26, Hamilton Rd, and speak to the concierge.
- **Caboolture Hospital** – staff carpark, 7 days 7.30am-3.30pm, PCR and RAT available. RAT kits also available after hours from EOC (phone 5316 5014), hospital coordinators, or ED triage if all other options not available.
- **STARS** – weekdays 8am-4pm phone 3647 7026 to arrange RAT collection.
- **Redcliffe** – fever clinic near main entrance, priority staff PCR tests 8am-9am 7 days, RAT kits available 9am-3.30pm 7days at fever clinic.
- **RBWH** –Education Centre, 9am-4.15pm, PCR available – *closing this Friday*.
- **RNA Showgrounds** – drive through & walk in fever clinic, Gate 5 O'Connell Tce, 8am-4pm 7 days, RAT collection and PCR tests.

For the latest opening staff testing hours and locations please visit the Metro North extranet. Please bring your staff ID and Medicare cards.

A full list of alternate COVID-19 testing services open to the public is updated daily and can be found on the Queensland Health fever clinic site. Staff can also visit any of these sites.

Fit testing and fit checking

Metro North Health is committed to prioritising fit testing for all our frontline staff. Please check the fit testing schedule on the extranet for local information.

The National Guideline, referenced in the Queensland Health guideline, recommends that you do a fit check every time you don an N95 mask to ensure you have a good seal. In an emergent situation, if your fitted mask cannot be located, please escalate to your team leader/hospital coordinator. A fit checked P2/N95 can be worn, as a last resort, until you are fit tested. You should not participate in aerosol generating procedures if you are not wearing a fit tested mask.

If you have any concerns about fit testing, you can submit them via the fit testing feedback portal. Urgent issues should be escalated to your supervisor and local EOC for resolution.

Thank you for your work.

Regards,

Louise O’Riordan
Metro North Health Incident Controller

Current Metro North Health tier activated – Tier 3

Helpful links

- [Register your positive RAT result](#)
- [Upload evidence of your vaccine or booster](#)
- [Qld Health contact tracing list](#)
- [Vaccination locations](#)
- [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**	No. of clinics	Presentations
	91	ICU patients					Yesterday
			ICU not ventilated	ICU ventilated			
MN total		5	2	320	27	7	353
Norfolk Island total****	Total in-patients			HITH /Home monitored	Total cases including recovered	Deaths	Close Contacts in quarantine
	0	ICU Not ventilated	ICU ventilated				
			0	0	10	87	0

Data as at 10/02/2022

**Metro North Health has 27 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.

**** As part of an Intergovernmental Agreement, from 1 January 2022 Metro North Health is providing a number of health support services to Norfolk Island. This includes advice and support to staff on island in terms of managing COVID patients. The numbers in this section of the table refer to COVID patients who remain on Norfolk Island and are receiving direct care by staff on Norfolk Island.