



13 July 2022

Dear colleagues,

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Current situation

We currently have 828 active cases of COVID in our care, including inpatients and in our Virtual Ward.

There are also 672 staff away from work due to either being COVID positive or requiring isolation due to being a close contact. This is a decline compared to a few days ago which is a positive sign.

I would like to remind everyone that all staff, visitors and contactors who are providing a service within the confines of a hospital or health service are required to wear a face mask at all times. Under Tier 3 of our COVID-19 and Influenza Response Plan, this must be a P2/N95 plus goggles/protective eyewear in clinical areas.

The Chief Health Officer yesterday encouraged people to wear masks anywhere there's a crowd, and reminded people that masks continue to be mandatory for public transport and healthcare facilities including aged care.

Change to isolation advice

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has updated the advice around reinfection after COVID. Due to the reinfection rate of Omicron BA4 and BA5 strains, [the advice](#) now is that if you develop symptoms four or more weeks post COVID infection, you need to retest and isolate if you are positive. Rapid Antigen Test kits should be available to all staff. Please ask your line manager if you do not know how to access one.

Antivirals

Access to [antiviral medications](#) has been expanded to:

- 70 years of age or older
- 50 years of age or older, with two other risk factors for severe disease
- you identify as a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, are 30 years of age or older with two other risk factors for severe disease (such as diabetes, severe heart disease, chronic kidney or respiratory disease).
- 18 years or older and immunocompromised.

Vaccination

It's important to keep your COVID-19 vaccinations up-to-date, which means having all boosters you are eligible for to provide an extra layer of protection against COVID-19.

Eligibility for [third and fourth dose](#) vaccination includes:

- All Queenslanders aged 16 and over who have had 2 COVID-19 vaccine doses more than 3 months ago should get a third COVID-19 vaccine dose.
- People aged 50 and over, and those at greater risk of severe illness, are recommended to have a fourth dose (also called a winter dose), from 3 months after the first booster dose.
- People aged 30 to 49 can also get a fourth dose if they choose.
- Even if you've had COVID-19, you should still get your boosters after an interval of 3 months.
- Children aged 5 to 15 should get 2 COVID-19 vaccine doses. Boosters are not currently recommended for this age group unless they are immunocompromised.

Useful resources:

- You can find a COVID vaccine provider using the [Department of Health COVID Vaccine Clinic Finder website](#).
- There are a range of PCR testing providers listed on the [Queensland Government website](#).
- Non-urgent respiratory treatment is available through [GP Respiratory Clinics](#).

More than 500 people tuned into yesterday's vidcast with Dr Krispin Hajkowicz and Madeline Hall, nurse practitioner for Queensland Adult Specialist Immunisation Service, to get an update on COVID and vaccination. The [vidcast recordings](#) are available on QHEPS.

Metro North Interpreter Service

Due to staff illness, there are disruptions to Metro North Interpreter Service. For all interpreter requests, please use the after hours phone number 3115 6999.

When calling please have your area cost centre ready as this is used to track bookings. If you are unaware of your cost centre, please ask your supervisor. You may experience delays in reaching booking officers and obtaining booking details. We are working to support the service to return to full service.

S4/HANA

S4/HANA is currently experiencing an extended outage. eHealth is working with the vendor to restore the system as soon as possible. Business continuity procedures are in place including three times a day checking for PPE and other stock levels, and alternative ordering processes are in place.

Regards,

Mark Butterworth

Metro North Health Incident Controller