

MESSAGE FROM THE METRO NORTH COVID-19 AND INFLUENZA HEALTH INCIDENT CONTROLLER

Metro North Health

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20 July 2022

Dear colleagues,

- **Current situation**
- **Tier 3**
- **COVID testing**
- **COVID vaccination**

Current situation

We currently have 861 active cases of COVID in our care, including 222 inpatients with 8 in ICU (4 ventilated). There are 639 patients in the Virtual Ward.

Today 704 staff are away from work due to either being COVID positive or requiring isolation due to being a close contact. Additionally, 126 close contact staff have been able to return to work as Critical Essential workers.

Tier 3

Metro North is still in Tier 3 of our COVID-19 and Influenza Response Plan. Under Tier 3, we have suspended all non-urgent planned care and increased our PPE in clinical areas to a minimum of P2/N95 mask and protective eyewear.

Staff should avoid gathering in tea rooms and other shared spaces and where possible take your breaks outdoors.

Additionally, from tomorrow all non-critical meetings and education need to be cancelled for the next four weeks. At the elbow education is to continue to support our frontline clinical staff. Our focus needs to be on ensuring staff are available to support our COVID response, which may include releasing staff to work in other area if requested.

COVID testing

There are a number of private pathology providers who are doing COVID-19 PCR testing as well as four-plex testing (COVID, Influenza A & B, and RSV). Some providers will do a bulk billed test without a GP referral.

If you need a PCR, check the list on the [Queensland Government website](#) for a suitable provider near you. There are a range of in clinic and drive through services.

Staff can also get free Rapid Antigen Test kits via your line manager.

If you have had a PCR, please remember you cannot look up your own results (or those of someone you know) on Queensland Health systems. COVID test results will be texted to you. Results for influenza or RSV will be available on My Health Record (via My Health Record or your myGov account).

People with respiratory symptoms can make an appointment (often same day) through [GP Respiratory Clinics](#).

COVID vaccination

We are still about three weeks out from the predicted peak of the current COVID surge and expect to see high numbers through to the end of August/ early September.

While the COVID third and fourth doses are not mandatory for most staff, they do provide additional protection against more serious disease.

You can find a COVID vaccine provider using the [Department of Health COVID Vaccine Clinic Finder website](#).

Once you've had your third or fourth dose, don't forget to upload details into the Queensland Health vaccine hub to assist us with workforce planning. The process is similar to recording your first two doses:

- Download your COVID digital certificate from your myGov account
- Go to the [COVID-19 Vaccination Hub](#)
- Choose the +Booster Vaccination option
- Add your booster details
- Upload or drag and drop your certificate
- Save

Regards,

Louise O'Riordan
Metro North Health Incident Controller