



COVID-19

Immediate Attention



Chief Executive Update

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update – 22 August 2020

This email is being sent to all employees

Message from the Chief Executive

As of today, we have:

- 29 COVID-19 positive inpatients, including two in ICU.
- 12 employees with COVID-19. They are in isolation at home and doing well.
- 88 employees in precautionary quarantine.

I am very pleased to invite expressions of interest for grants of up to \$100,000 to support ground-breaking research into COVID-19 at Monash Health.

Through the great work of the Monash Health Foundation, funds totalling more than \$450,000 have been raised through public appeal to support COVID-19 research. The success of this appeal is testament to both the strength of the research underway at Monash Health and our community's willingness for us to continue to guide them through the pandemic with high-quality and timely care.

Eligible research studies must be directly relevant to COVID-19 and provide outcomes that will either improve:

- patient health and wellbeing at either an individual or population level; or
- health service delivery to provide safe and high-quality care for affected or at-risk patients.

[Learn more here.](#)

Prioritising safety

Everything we do right now is about prioritising your safety and that of our patients.

In the past couple of days, we've detailed [the steps we are taking in relation to the Peninsula Health outbreak](#) - additional steps above and beyond those we would usually take in a contact tracing process, to ensure your ongoing safety and to support our Peninsula Health colleagues and community.

We have also requested that every Monash Health employee [tell us all the places they work](#) – whether that is other health services or in voluntary roles. The Department of Health and Human Services has requested this information as part of its approach to managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know workplaces are one of the main ways the virus has been spread, particularly in this second wave, and we need to have a full understanding of where you are working to keep everyone safe.

Another element of safety at work is how we [use our shared spaces](#). This includes break rooms, shared desk spaces and meeting rooms. We are asking everyone to play their role here and to use the [new tools and checklists](#) which are being provided to ensure we minimise close contacts.

To ensure we are compliant with the latest government directions and our own safety guidelines, we need to make sure that rooms are not exceeding their capacity and that personal and hand hygiene requirements are being followed at all times.

As always, I thank you for adapting to these new measures and directions – it can be challenging to make it sustainable, but it is just so important right now.

Congratulations to Dr Mark Adams - Service Director, Anaesthesia and Perioperative Services

I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Mark Adams as the Service Director, Anaesthesia and Perioperative Services at Monash Health, following an extensive recruitment and interview process.

Mark's appointment is both significant and strategically important to Monash Health as it will formally bring together the three Departments (Monash Medical Centre/Moorabbin, Casey and Dandenong) under the one leader.

Most recently, Mark has provided outstanding leadership and invaluable expertise, through the preparation, collaboration, and ongoing co-ordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic both from an Anaesthesia and Perioperative Services and broader Health Service perspective. Mark has also previously played a significant role in the support and development of the Monash Health Clot Retrieval Service, the establishment of the Anaesthesia Allergy Outpatient service through a collaboration with Monash and Peninsula Health, and implementation of the Monash Health Electronic Medical Record.

Mark has a strong focus on enhancing access to safe, high-quality and best practice clinical care for our patients and community. These qualities are particularly important and significant in the current COVID-19 pandemic contextual environment.

Please join me in congratulating Mark on his appointment, thanking him for taking on this position and wishing him well for this vitally important health service leadership role.

Celebrating success

We regularly take the opportunity to shine a light on some of our standout performers through our Say Thanks And Recognise (STAR) Awards.

In the third of four presentations, we congratulated some of our colleagues who have set a very high benchmark in the last six months. This week we heard from the winners in the **Improving Care and Access** category:

- **Justine Little, Social Work Clinical and Research Lead** - who is regarded as a leader in the field of Social Work across the state. During COVID-19, Justine liaised closely with a range of stakeholders to rapidly redesign clinical systems to support optimal patient care and timely

access to services. At short notice, Justine also took on the role of Social Work Manager at Dandenong and Casey Hospital to support clinical operations during COVID-19, leading to the establishment of additional social work services being provided.

- **Lauren Johnson and Julie Woolsey, ICU Liaison Service at Dandenong Hospital** - who have been integral in managing the safety of patients and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the opening of the COVID-19 ICU at Dandenong Hospital and the new Casey ICU, Lauren and Julie have been actively upskilling new nursing employees to the ICU environment and supporting appropriate PPE techniques.

STAR awards are open for nominations year-round, so when you are impressed by something a member of your team has done, then make sure [we hear about it too](#). Join us [next Thursday](#) to hear from the recipients of the 'Excellent Experiences' award.

Thanks again to all of you for rising to each challenge and for your excellent care and dedication.

Andrew Stripp
Chief Executive

Key Messages

Have you completed the Employee Workplace Declaration form?

To ensure the safety of patients and employees in the workplace, DHHS requires healthcare workers to declare other places of work. This relates to any paid, unpaid or voluntary involvement with any organisation.

You must complete this form, even if Monash Health is your only employer. This is a [Directive](#) from the Public Health Commander, under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The information collected will help inform the Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including outbreaks in healthcare settings.

What you need to do:

- Click [here](#) to complete the form.
- Senior Medical Staff (SMS) are not required to complete the form, as they have completed the Workforce Mobility Survey.

For more information, visit the [FAQs page](#) on the Monash Health COVID-19 website or contact your manager. Thank you for your continued cooperation, flexibility and dedication.

Using shared spaces safely

Checking in to break rooms and shared spaces just got a lot easier. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our on-site employees, we have updated some of the ways you check-in and use our shared spaces. These include the introduction of updated signage, safety checklists and a simplified online check-in process via QR code or URL. To ensure we are compliant with the latest Government directions, it is critical that rooms are not exceeding their capacity and that personal and hand hygiene etiquette is being observed at all times. [Learn more here](#).

PPE requirements for Code Blues

On 31 July 2020, we moved to a higher level of PPE requirements for our healthcare workers attending Code Blue and MET calls. All patients who deteriorate and require a Code Blue or MET response will be managed as if they are COVID-19 positive - regardless of their known COVID-19 status or setting of care.

Key change: CPR (chest compressions and bag and mask ventilation) must be conducted in Tier 3 PPE. [Please note further detail on the Code Blue and MET call PPE requirements. Site-specific details can be found here.](#)

New precautions for employees and patients who were at Peninsula Health from 3 August

Following an identified COVID-19 outbreak at Peninsula Health, employees who worked at one or more of their sites between 3-17 August may be at risk of COVID-19 infection. Peninsula Health has identified the outbreak and has taken appropriate steps to manage the situation.

Monash Health has taken additional steps, above and beyond those we would usually take in a contact tracing process, to ensure the ongoing safety of our patients and employees. [Learn about the actions required here, including FAQs.](#)

A blood test breakthrough in the fight against COVID-19

A collaboration between BioPRIA, Monash University and clinicians and researchers at Monash Health has led to a discovery that could help provide rapid diagnosis of COVID-19 across the globe and assist with the distribution and trialling of a vaccine once established. The world-first research has been able to detect COVID-19 using blood samples, in about 20 minutes, identifying whether someone has antibodies to the infection.

Dr Maryza Graham, Medical Microbiologist and Infectious Diseases Physician at Monash Health, said: "Test turnaround time can have an enormous impact on pandemic control, and therefore rapid tests such as this one are especially important." [Read more here.](#)

Excellence shines through at our STAR Awards

For the third week in a row, our Employee Forum offered examples of excellence from across Monash Health, as we heard from more STAR award winners from the first half of the year. Congratulations to all of our STAR award recipients.

Don't forget, STAR awards are open for nominations year-round, so when you are impressed by something a member of your team has done, then [make sure we hear about it too. Read about this week's award recipients here.](#)

Grants of up to \$100,000 available to support ground-breaking research into COVID-19

Through the great work of the Monash Health Foundation, funds totalling more than \$450,000 have so far been raised through its public appeal to support COVID-19 research. As set out in the [COVID-19 Funding Application guide](#), eligible research studies must be directly relevant to COVID-19 and must provide outcomes that will either improve:

- patient health and wellbeing at either an individual or population level; or
- health service delivery to provide safe and high-quality care for affected or at-risk patients.

[Learn more about the grants and application process here.](#)

Wear It Purple – put on your purple gear for LGBTIQ+ youth: Friday 28 August

Friday 28 August is Wear it Purple Day and supports the rights of young people in the LGBTIQ+ community. It promotes the creation of safe spaces in schools, universities, workplaces and public spaces to show LGBTIQ+ young people that they are seen and supported.

The Monash Health Equity and Inclusion LGBTIQ+ Committee is proud to support Wear It Purple Day and invites all Monash Health employees to join them in wearing something purple to help show your support to our young LGBTIQ+ employees, patients and visitors. [Read more here.](#)

Eastwood Hostel care recipients send Helen a 'Happy Birthday'

After hearing that Helen Mangham would be celebrating her 105th birthday alone in isolation, the care recipients at our Eastwood Hostel care facility decided to help. Helen couldn't hold big celebrations for her birthday in her hometown of Lifsey Springs, Atlanta due to COVID-19. So, to help celebrate this milestone, her family asked for birthday cards from around the world.

Simran Kaur, a member of the Wellbeing Team across Residential Services, started brainstorming with the care recipients about how they could make Helen's birthday memorable. [Read what they did here.](#)

Urology team to 'pump the pedals' in pursuit of enhanced patient care

The Monash Health Urology unit will take to their exercise bikes in a fundraising effort over the weekend of 26-27 September. Unit director Mr Scott Donnellan and Urology trainee Dr David Wetherell conceived and planned '[Pump the Pedals for Prostate cancer](#)' – a virtual bike ride from Melbourne to Sydney. Members of the Urology team will ride in a relay format using Zwift technology which will link riders at Casey Hospital with colleagues and friends across Australia.

They aim to raise more than \$100,000 to help purchase a new ultrasound device and six probes for prostate biopsies and to provide further funding for prostate cancer nurses in the unit. [Read more here.](#)

Getting a good night's sleep – tips and tricks

At last week's Employee Forum, clinical neuropsychologist Dr Natalie Grima spoke about the importance of sleep hygiene and provided suggestions on how to develop good sleeping habits. Dr Grima outlined six strategies which can help bring structure to your sleep routine:

1. Review and amend your sleep hygiene habits.
2. Limit exposure to media.
3. Relax your body to quiet your mind.
4. Get up at the same time, regardless of how much sleep you had.
5. If you find yourself tossing and turning in bed, take a break and get out of bed. Return to bed when you feel sleepy.
6. Seek professional help.

You can find Dr Grima's presentation [here](#) and further resources on the [Health and Wellbeing](#) page of the Monash Health COVID-19 website. [Read more here.](#)

Now available online: asking the identifying question - are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?

If you missed it, the presentation by AJ Williams-Tchen talk about the [when, where, why and how we need to ask this identifying question is now available here.](#)

AJ gives a really informative and concise explanation of why asking the question is such an important step in closing the health gaps between indigenous Australians and the rest of the community. In the

meantime, don't forget to complete your mandatory training [here](#) or book for a more detailed training experience.

Yoga program a great success for women in cardiac rehabilitation

A team of cardiac care researchers at Monash Heart has piloted a women's only yoga program to encourage attendance at cardiac rehabilitation, as part of a project in collaboration with Monash Health and the Australian Centre for Heart Health.

Funded by the Heart Foundation and conducted over a six-month period in 2019 at the Monash Health Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre in Clayton, the yoga program focused on both the physical and mental aspects of recovery after a cardiac event. [Read more here.](#)

Continue to take advantage of wellbeing resources

Take advantage of the health and wellbeing resources we have available for you, including the [Call a Psychologist](#) service and the [employee assistance program](#). Don't forget [the basics](#) of your physical health and remember we have links to resources online for you and your teams, including a helpful guide to [stretching at your desk](#), wherever that desk might be.

Ensure you are working to the most up-to-date advice

The information about COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Ensure you are working to the most up-to-date advice by referring to the [Monash Health Employee Coronavirus website](#). To make accessing the site quicker, you can create a shortcut on your smartphone by following [these instructions](#).

All managers are requested to share these updates with their teams and discuss at stand-ups and handovers. Please print a copy and display it in communication books and on employee noticeboards.

As advice and information evolve, please consult the latest updates and visit the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) and [Monash Health COVID-19 website](#) for employees regularly for the latest.
