



COVID-19

Immediate Attention



Chief Executive Update

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update – 31 July 2020

This email is being sent to all employees

Message from the Chief Executive

As of today, we have:

- 16 COVID-19 positive inpatients.
- 10 employees with COVID-19. They are in isolation at home and doing well.
- 34 employees in precautionary quarantine.

In this update, I will outline a number of initiatives that will help us support and protect you, as well as some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Personal Protective Equipment

As case numbers increase, it is critical that we remain vigilant and disciplined with our safety measures; hand hygiene, using appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and risk-assessing the situation before any patient contact.

Face shields are now mandatory in clinical areas

Employees in clinical areas will be provided with a disposable face shield each time you start a shift. You must label it and keep it with you during the course of your day – even when you are on break. The face shield needs to be kept clean and disinfected until you conclude your shift, when you will need to dispose of it in the general waste bins. [Read more about the use of face shields here.](#)

Changes to Adult Code Blue and MET response

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. [Learn more here.](#)

Access to Allergy/Dermatology clinic

Some employees are encountering allergic symptoms related to occupational allergy – such as a reaction to the use of masks. In response, the Allergy and Dermatology departments have developed an emergency telehealth clinic for employees. [Learn more here.](#)

Aged care

While residential care facilities operated by Monash Health remain free of COVID-19 cases, there are now more than 900 active COVID-19 cases related to aged care facilities across the state, and case numbers from facilities within our catchment area are increasing.

Mandatory droplet and contact precautions for residential aged care residents

Aged care residents coming into Monash Health will now be managed in droplet and contact precautions for 14 days since their last contact with the aged care service.

[Specific advice about admission, emergency departments, dialysis, diagnostic procedures, aerosol procedures and residents returning to their place of residence is available here.](#)

Outpatients from residential care facilities

Aged care residents who would usually attend our campuses as outpatients will now be managed by a telehealth model where possible.

If care cannot be provided using telehealth, we will delay appointments where it will not cause harm. If a patient has to visit a site, they will be managed in full droplet precautions.

Early engagement with residential care facilities

Monash Health is providing support to residential aged care facilities within our catchment that have reported a COVID-19 outbreak. This is part of the State and Federal governments' co-ordinated efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 among our most vulnerable Victorians.

When a facility reports an outbreak we will stand up a response team and work collaboratively with the DHHS, Commonwealth Aged Care Program and related agencies to assist the facility management to bring the outbreak under control.

We commenced this week by supporting the team at Outlook Gardens Aged Care in Dandenong, to ensure continuity of operations and safe delivery of care while containment, contact tracing and deep cleaning occurs. Outlook Gardens will return to their normal operations and management once all residents and employees have returned negative results.

Changes to surgery

The State Government announced this week that elective surgeries are now suspended, with the exception of category one and the most urgent category two procedures.

This decision has been made to both free up hospital beds to care for patients with coronavirus, and to allow additional support for aged care homes to support COVID-19 positive residents. [Read more about elective surgery changes here.](#)

PPE training for residential services across Victoria

At the request of the Department of Health and Human Services, we have developed an online training module for standard and transmission-based precautions and the correct use of PPE for residential services across Victoria.

Monash Health is working closely with Monash University who have been commissioned to provide the face-to-face component of this training.

Reduction in agency employees

To ensure consistent PPE practices, and to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between services, we have put a hold on agency employees working in our residential facilities.

Before reintroducing agency employees, we will put in place new processes that require agency staff to be screened on booking with the agency and prior to commencement. Agency employees will also be required to complete our online PPE training and to wear appropriate PPE in all clinical areas, as per Monash Health employee requirements.

These initiatives will help us support and protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community. I thank everyone involved in this work, and each one of you across our health service for the way you have faced this crisis and contributed so much when our community needs you.

I have said it before, but I have never been prouder to work for Monash Health than I am now.

Andrew Stripp

Chief Executive

Key Messages

Face shields

The use of face shields is now mandatory in all clinical areas. [Read more about the use of face shields here.](#)

Changes to Adult Code Blue and MET response

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. [Learn more here.](#)

Important precautions for residential aged care residents

Any aged care resident coming into Monash Health must be managed in droplet and contact precautions. They will be managed as if they are a close contact – which means that these precautions must continue for 14 days since the last contact with the aged care service.

[Read full details of the precautions for residential aged care residents here.](#)

Changes to elective surgery

The State Government announced this week that elective surgeries are now suspended, with the exception of category one and the most urgent emergency surgeries and procedures. [Read more here.](#)

Access to Allergy/Dermatology clinic for Monash Health employees

COVID-19 has changed the way we work and in many instances, our practices have changed. As a result, there are employees who are encountering allergic symptoms related to occupational allergy – such as a reaction to the use of masks. In response, the Allergy and Dermatology departments have developed an emergency telehealth clinic for Monash Health employees. [Learn more here.](#)

Pine O Clean wipes for non-clinical spaces

Yesterday (Monday 27 July), we introduced new Pine O Clean pre-moistened wipes for cleaning of desks, computers and phones in non-clinical spaces across Monash Health. This will add a layer of cleaning between uses of these items in shared areas, so you should apply the new wipes to clean any shared non-clinical area before and after use.

Clinical areas will continue to use Clinell wipes for cleaning of these items, WOWs etc. The following item codes are now available on I-Proc for ordering:

402434	Pine O Clean Surface Wipes Lemon Lime 45Pk Yellow PACK
402435	Pine O Clean Surface Wipes Lemon Lime 90Pk Yellow PACK

Self-care for healthcare workers – looking after yourself

In a time when the community is relying heavily on healthcare workers, it is normal to feel anxious or stressed. In a recent Employee Forum, Dr Sika Turner, Senior Clinical Psychologist, spoke about the importance of practising self-care, particularly for healthcare workers, 13% of whom are at risk of work-related mental health disorders. [Learn more and view Dr Turner's presentation.](#)

DonateLife Week – sign up to be an organ donor today!

Organ and tissue donation make a real difference to the lives of hundreds of Australians each year. DonateLife week focuses on registration as an organ donor, but also having the conversation with family and friends.

Due to COVID-19, organ donation and transplantation has slowed down. It is important now, more than ever, to have the conversation about organ donation with your loved ones. [Learn more here.](#)

Our Social Workers tackle homelessness during COVID-19

The theme for this year's Homelessness Week, 2 – 7 August 2020, is 'Everybody Needs a Home', and Monash Health senior social worker Sushma Shrestha is playing a key role in tackling homelessness in Dandenong and Frankston.

[Learn more about Sushma's work and the Rough Sleeper Initiative.](#)

After 140 days at MCH, baby Willow goes home

In March, bride-to-be Christy was rushed to the hospital due to pregnancy complications. The story made [news headlines](#) when our maternal fetal medicine team helped Christy and fiancé Brendan co-ordinate a wedding in the chapel at Monash Medical Centre.

Two days after the wedding, baby girl Willow made an early arrival at just 24 weeks and weighing only 600grams. Last week, after two surgeries and 140 days in hospital, Willow was finally able to go home. [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 [dhhs.vic.gov.au]Department of Health and Human Services and [coronavirus.monashhealth.org]Monash Health COVID-19 website for employees regularly for the latest.
