



**COVID-19**

Immediate Attention



# Chief Executive Update

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) update – 27 October 2020

This email is being sent to all employees

### Message from the Chief Executive

As of today, we have:

- Two COVID-19 positive inpatients
- One employee with COVID-19
- Five employees in precautionary quarantine

And of course, our State's second day in a row of no new cases. An achievement we can all be very pleased and relieved to have reached.

With community numbers decreasing, we are now able to progressively and safely make changes to our operations as we move toward a COVID normal state. Our Model of Care and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be adjusted to ensure we can balance our operational responsibilities with the safe delivery of care.

From tomorrow, we will start to implement a new Model of Care. Over the past week, our clinical and operational leadership team, under the guidance of Chief Operating Officer, Martin Keogh, have consulted extensively to define patient accommodation, workforce configuration and requirements, equipment needs and PPE coach, advisor and concierge resourcing to accommodate the changes.

The safety of our employees, patients, and community remains at the core of every decision made and the agreed model.

Aligned to the low case numbers and the new Model of Care will be refinements to the use of PPE introduced at the same time.

As these are important changes that affect our workforce, I strongly encourage you to watch the recording of today's Employee Forum to hear about changes to our Model of Care, the slides that accompanied the presentation can be viewed [here](#). Changes to PPE requirements and the establishment of our new Respiratory Protection Program were also discussed.

### Changes to PPE requirements

The PPE Expert Advisory Committee has reviewed the PPE policy, and the following changes have been approved for implementation by the Health Service Incident Command Team.

These changes will further align Monash Health policy with DHHS guidelines and will come into effect from Wednesday 28 October:

- Tier 1 PPE now is the use of a surgical mask and eye protection. The N95 mask has been removed from Tier 1. Tier 1 PPE applies in low-risk areas where patients are NOT suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and are not in quarantine. These low-risk areas now also include:
  - Cold zone emergency departments - Casey, Dandenong and MMC
  - Diagnostic imaging
  - Community home visits when there is no suspicion of COVID-19 (negative COVID-19 screen)
  - Birth Suites – Casey, Dandenong & MMC.
- Tier 2 PPE is the use of droplet and contact precautions. Tier 2 PPE applies to routine care of individual patients who have been swabbed for COVID-19 and awaiting a test result, where there are symptoms that could be consistent with COVID-19 but no epidemiological risk factors. This group of patients is now termed as SCOVID (low risk).  
*\* Employees working in COVID-19 admission wards should continue to apply Tier 3 PPE until these wards cease under the new model of care.*
- Tier 3 PPE is aerosol and contact precautions. Tier 3 PPE applies to:
  - The care of confirmed COVID-19 patients.
  - Patients who are swabbed for COVID-19 and awaiting a test result and have the epidemiology and demonstrated symptoms consistent with COVID-19 disease. This group is now termed SCOVID (probable).
  - It also applies when performing aerosol-generating procedures on SCOVID (low risk) patients or if these patients exhibit aerosol-generating behaviours (such as yelling, screaming etc.).

While these guidelines provide a framework to guide practice, it is important to note that the level of PPE used is a clinical decision. Clinicians are encouraged to assess the level of risk for every patient on a case-by-case basis and use PPE appropriate to the risk.

For further details, access the Conventional use of PPE poster [here](#).

## **Visitor restriction amendments for residential care facilities**

As we have sadly seen throughout the world, older people are at a greater risk of severe illness with COVID-19. Along with physical distancing and infection control measures, Monash Health has taken great care to ensure our residential care facilities remained free of the virus, including the difficult, but necessary decision to restrict visitation.

We are now in a position to increase visitation using a staged approach. We will ease some visitation restrictions across Monash Health residential care facilities while maintaining our level of care, safety and support to our care recipients.

Visitation has been reintroduced, allowing for one visitor, per care recipient, per day between the hours of 1pm to 5pm, for a maximum of one hour.

Several precautionary measures have been put in place to ensure visitors and care recipients can enjoy each other's company safely. [Further details and updated visitation resources can be found here.](#)

### **Asymptomatic testing for residential care services**

To keep aged-care recipients, their families and employees safe, we are beginning a program of voluntary asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for all Monash Health employees working in residential aged care services.

If you work within residential care, we encourage you to participate in the free program, which involves getting tested every two weeks, even if you feel well and don't have any COVID-19 symptoms. You will not need to isolate while waiting for test results as part of this precautionary program of testing.

[Read more about asymptomatic testing here.](#)

Thank you for your continued dedication to our patients, community and each other. It's been a long journey to get this far, and while the journey continues, I remain proud of our talented and skilled community of employees and what you have achieved together to date.

**Andrew Stripp**  
Chief Executive

## **Key Messages**

### **Beyond the Mask Episode 3 – Melissa Williams**

The latest Beyond the Mask episode features Melissa Williams discussing why she feels like one of the lucky ones to be working at Monash Health during these times. Learn about Melissa and her colleagues' efforts to help their patients, many who were isolated from their family and loved ones during Melbourne's lockdown. [Watch the video here](#)

### **Monash Health Respiratory Protection Program**

Over the coming months, Monash Health will be implementing its Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) to enhance the effectiveness of respiratory protective equipment further and ensure associated processes and practices keep you safe and healthy in the workplace. [Read more about this initiative here.](#)

### **Changes to PPE in Birth Suites**

Commencing Wednesday 28 October, there will be changes to PPE in the Birth Suites. Theatre workflows have aligned with these changes to ensure timely and safe care for women when transitioning between the two clinical areas. [Further details and resources can be found here.](#)

### **Our outdoor areas are getting a makeover**

With warmer weather on the way, and to create additional break spaces for you to enjoy, we're giving some of our outdoor areas a makeover.

Over the coming weeks and months, we will be refurbishing and revamping some of our outdoor spaces across our sites. We appreciate the importance of access to meal and break areas while

working on-site, and these additional spaces will allow for safe, easy access, and ensure appropriate social distancing.

Recently, we rolled out a series of new break spaces in the form of marquees, as well as your chance to name the Monash Health marquees. In addition, we will be commencing works at several campuses. [Learn more here.](#)

### **DHHS proposals regarding changes to the funding of MBS patients**

Following the signing of the new National Health Reform Agreement earlier this year, the Commonwealth Department of Health is proposing changes to the funding of MBS patients in public hospital settings.

The Victorian DHHS have advised they are corresponding with the Commonwealth and are seeking clarity on several aspects of the proposals. They have also released a new MBS policy and set of draft best-practice guidelines. The DHHS is consulting with Victorian Health Services via a reference group that involves Monash Health. [Learn more here.](#)

### **We're listening – the COVID-19 employee survey is open again**

Over 4,000 employees completed the COVID-19 employee survey in June this year, and we're keen to hear how things have changed for you over the last four months.

To understand how the efforts put in place throughout this year are working and where further effort is needed, we are again running our short, confidential five-minute survey. Please complete the survey by Thursday 29 October so we can work to make sure you are supported, as we work towards 'COVID normal'. [Read more here.](#)

### **Nominations open for the Junior Medical Staff Awards**

To acknowledge and recognise the contribution and future leaders of our Junior Medical Staff (JMS), please nominate outstanding JMS in this year's JMS Awards. Nominations close on Sunday 15 November, and you can nominate a worthy JMS today by [filling in a nomination here.](#) [Find out more here.](#)

### **Join us for the Gathering of Kindness**

This year's Gathering of Kindness will be a virtual affair not to be missed! All Monash Health employees will have access to the online program of events, culminating in World Kindness Day on Friday 13 November.

The Gathering of Kindness aims to build, nurture and instil a culture of kindness throughout the healthcare system. This year's online Gathering of Kindness, from 9 to 13 November, will feature a range of fabulous expert guest speakers, performers and international presenters and you can choose which sessions are right for you. [Learn more here.](#)

### **A special invitation to a 'Celebration at Home'**

Since the first Dandelion Wishes Gala in 2016, the events have raised more than \$2 million for Monash Children's Hospital. With the 2020 Gala unable to be held due to COVID-19, the team decided to take the evening of fun, performances, messages and fundraising into people's homes.

Hosted by Alicia Loxley from Nine News, the Dandelion Wishes Celebration at Home will be held on 21 November 2020 from 7.15 to 8.30pm and will create the buzz of a top-quality event. Funds

raised will go towards equipment for the new Children's Emergency Department at the Monash Health Clayton site.

In a special offer just for Monash Health employees, tickets to the Dandelion Wishes Celebration at Home will be available at no charge. [Book tickets and learn more here.](#)

## **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and at Monash Health, we are proud of the outstanding teams of nurses, doctors, specialists and surgeons we have working in breast services. Katie Evans, one of our McGrath nurses at Dandenong and Casey, shares her experience of being a breast care nurse for the last 20 years. [Read Katie's inspiring story here.](#)

## **Dr Josh Abasszade's video**

Earlier this month, Monash Health's Dr Joshua Abasszade recorded an essential message for our social media channels to help us communicate with the Dari speakers in our community. Learn more about this vital communication to our diverse community and [watch the video here.](#)

## **Infection Prevention Awareness Week**

The vital role infection preventionists play in keeping us all safe has been brought to the forefront of our lives this year. COVID-19 has challenged healthcare workers from all disciplines, but perhaps none more so than infection prevention teams.

Last week, we celebrated Infection Prevention Awareness Week and encouraged people to take a moment to appreciate the hardworking infection preventionists who have led the way in this pandemic. It also reminded us to implement their advice! [Learn more here.](#)

## **More important than ever to manage hay fever and asthma this year**

It's essential to manage any hay fever or asthma symptoms, as these conditions can present symptoms similar to COVID-19, such as a runny nose, cough or shortness of breath. While good management can help prevent symptoms, patients must get tested for COVID-19 if their symptoms are different from usual.

Grass pollen season brings a seasonal increase in asthma and hay fever (seasonal allergic rhinitis). It also brings the chance of epidemic thunderstorm asthma. Thunderstorm asthma can affect those with asthma or seasonal hay fever. Learn more here about the support available, including for Monash Health employees. [Learn more here.](#)

## **Upcoming events**

Stay up to date with events on our COVID-19 website for Monash Health employees.

## **Manager Briefing, 2pm Wednesday 28 October**

The Manager Briefing is a fortnightly update for Monash Health Managers.

### **Agenda**

- Fixed Versus Growth Mindset - Simon Tedstone, Consultant Organisational Development and Learning - There are two mindsets you can use to address the challenges you face, both inside and outside your work, growth and fixed. Having a growth mindset is essential for success yet, particularly in challenging times, we can all fall into the trap of

having a fixed mindset. We will explore both mindsets, look at some examples to understand their impacts and identify some strategies to support you to intentionally choose one over the other.

- Engaging your Health and Safety Representative - Sue Forrest, Health and Safety Manager
- Interview with Martin Keogh, Chief Operating Officer

[Read more.](#)

## Employee Forum, 2pm Thursday 29 October

Thursday's Employee Forums have a wellbeing focus. Hear from Detsy Holton, our Dandenong ED Wellbeing Champion and Lisa Fosternally, Nurse Manager at Moorabbin Hospital about what they're doing to promote wellbeing in their work areas. [Read more.](#)

- [Watch previous recordings](#) of Employee Forums and Manager Briefings
- [See all upcoming events](#)

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**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.

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