



COVID-19



Chief Executive Update

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update – 24 December 2021

As of today, we have:

- 76 COVID-19 positive inpatients
- 28 employees with COVID-19
- 20 employees in precautionary quarantine

In this update, we cover:

- Staying alert to Omicron
- Ensuring we are prepared for a rise in case numbers
- Updated furlough requirements
- Accreditation date set
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Staying alert to Omicron

As we near the end of the year, we are keeping a close eye on the Omicron variant of COVID-19. Data from overseas indicates that Omicron is more transmissible and presents an increased risk of reinfection. However, we still have some way to go before fully understanding the severity of disease and its impact on hospitalisation rates.

While we learn more about the variant, we are taking a precautionary approach at a state and health service level.

Masks are now mandatory indoors in Victoria for eight-year-olds and over - this applies in all indoor settings except private homes.

Boosters are now available after your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. You can find out more about boosters and where to get vaccinated on our [Employee Vaccination Hub](#).

As Professor Sutton said easier this week, the evidence is "pretty clear" that a booster dose provides greater protection from hospitalisation, ICU and death. Please do not delay.

Ensuring we are prepared for a rise in case numbers

With COVID-19 modelling suggesting we will see another peak (and the resulting increase in hospitalisation) in January 2022, some changes in roles and work locations may be required to ensure we share the load and have the capacity for a 'surge' workforce.

If this impacts your role, we will work with you to plan any changes, and where they are required, provide the training, support and supervision needed to enable you to undertake work in a new area successfully.

Updated furlough requirements

We have made updates to the furlough requirements for employees. Blue indicates the requirement to furlough. If these conditions apply to you, please contact the Employee COVID-19 Hotline on 8572 5610 (7am to 8pm – seven days a week) for advice.

Staff needing to furlough

Covid positive staff	• 10 days isolation
Staff member has symptoms	• Isolate while symptomatic and wait negative swab
Household or "household like" PCC	• > 4 hours contact = 7 days isolation
Staff member has someone at home:	• Who is symptomatic & deemed a contact & waiting for PCR
All others come to work	• N95, surveillance swab and breaks alone



Accreditation date set

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) has advised that our National Standards Accreditation Assessment has been scheduled for April 2022.

I want to thank each of you again for your work to prepare for the assessment that was postponed and then cancelled this year. Please know your work is appreciated and will hold us in good stead for next year. I will provide an update when further details are advised.

Have a safe and happy festive season

I wish you all a safe and happy festive season. For those gathering with family and friends over the holiday season, the Victorian Government has produced a guide to [COVID-safe gatherings](#). To those of you working, thank you. For many of our patients, consumers, and their families, it is a difficult time to find themselves in need of our services, so the care and comfort you provide is deeply appreciated.

For those taking leave, I wish you a well-deserved, safe, and restful break.

Andrew Stripp
Chief Executive

Key Messages

Thank you for so many highlights

Please take a few minutes to watch the ['Year that was' video](#), which captures some of what we have achieved together over the past 12 months. It is a wonderful look at how our Monash Health teams have cared for the communities of the southeast.

Your remarkable contribution has not gone unnoticed, internally by our Executive and Board of Directors and by some of Victoria's leaders, including Premier Daniel Andrews, Victoria's Chief Health Officer Professor Brett Sutton, Director of the Doherty Institute Professor Sharon Lewin AO, COVID Commander Jeroen Weimar, and many others. You'll find their messages of thanks in the [Thank You video](#).

Update on Clayton Emergency Department

We have fast-tracked construction at Monash Medical Centre, delivering a new adult emergency space sooner than originally planned. Monash Medical Centre's fully redeveloped emergency department opened to patients on Wednesday 22 December 2021, several months ahead of the original planned opening in 2022. [Read more here](#).

Inpatient visitation on Christmas Day

Recognising that visitor restrictions can be particularly challenging for our patients and loved ones at this time of year, we are taking steps to ensure all inpatients have access to a visitor on Christmas Day. [Read more here](#).

COVID-19 Vaccination for 5 to 11-year-olds

Australia's COVID-19 vaccination program will be extended to all children aged 5 to 11 years from 10 January 2022, following recommendations from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

On Tuesday, our Employee Forum focused on COVID-19 vaccine for children. We were joined by Professor Rhonda Stuart and Dr Jeremy Carr in an informative session which you can view on the [Employee COVID Website Events page](#).

Priority COVID-19 testing at Clayton for household members of employees

We are pleased to announce that household members of Monash Health employees are eligible for priority COVID-19 testing at our Monash University drive-through Screening Clinic in Clayton.

Due to capacity, household members of employees are unable to receive priority testing at our Dandenong Screening Clinic. [Read more about how you and your household members can access priority testing](#).

Shared mailboxes now on M365

All Monash Health mailboxes, including shared mailboxes and calendars and distribution lists, have been moved to M365. Here's what you need to know to [access your team's shared mailboxes](#).

Enterprise Bargaining Update

Monash Health has several Enterprise Agreements currently in various stages of bargaining – [here's a quick update on each one](#).

A new medical oncology inpatient service at Monash Medical Centre

On Monday 6 December 2021, we commenced a new medical oncology service at Monash Medical Centre (MMC), Clayton. This new service enables medical oncology patients at MMC to receive timely access to specialised assessment and treatment under the care of a Medical Oncologist. [For more information, including admission criteria, read more here.](#)

Working remotely

Monash Health recognises the benefits of providing flexible working arrangements and supports working remotely, where it is safe and practical to do so. For details about working remotely, please refer to the People and Culture - Working Remotely procedure in PROMPT.

Annual Report released

If you or your stakeholders would like a copy of our annual report, it is now available to read and for download on the website. [Read our 2021 Annual Report here.](#)

Improvements to our High Acuity Discharge Clinic

As part of our continuous improvement approach and the excellent feedback we have received, we have recently made several improvements to how our new High Acuity Discharge Clinic (HADC) will run.

[Learn about the HADC, including a summary of our first patient, referral requirements, making a booking, and examples of patients \(and their conditions\) that can utilise the HADC here.](#)

Service Modification Operational Plan December 2021/January 2022

As in previous years, we will reduce our planned activity during the Christmas/New Year period. This year's operational plan is particularly important in the context of COVID-19 and aims to strike a balance between maintenance of clinical services in the setting of ongoing COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 demand, and the need for employees to take a well-deserved break where possible as we prepare for the year ahead.

- **Clinical activities**

There will be a reduction in planned clinical activities across a four-week period until Monday 10 January 2022. Some clinical services and sites will either temporarily close or reduce their capacity during this time in line with reduced demand.

A special thank you to everyone who is working or on-call over the holiday period. Your contribution is very much appreciated and vital for our patients. To all our colleagues who can use this opportunity to take a break, enjoy a well-earned rest.

- **Vaccination**

Our vaccination sites will close from 24 December 2021 to 3 January 2022, reopening with normal activity from 4 January 2022.

- **Screening**

The Monash Health led screening service at the Clayton drive-through testing site will close 25 – 28 December 2021 (inclusive), and 1 - 3 January 2022. Priority patient groups (maternity/theatres) will be diverted to the Dandenong drive-through testing site on these days.

The Clayton drive-through (run by 4Cyte) will continue to operate throughout, with extended hours of 8am – 8pm. Employee priority access will be maintained at the Dandenong drive-through testing site.

[Service Modification Operational Plan December 2021 / January 2022](#)

Do you know a nurse or midwife with an exceptional story worth celebrating?

Nominate one of your incredible colleagues for the 2022 HESTA Nursing and Midwifery Awards!

These national awards aim to recognise the nurses, midwives, nurse educators, researchers and personal care workers who improve health outcomes by providing outstanding care and support for Australians in need.

[Nominations for the Awards](#) are now open and close on 6 February 2022.

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.
