



File Ref: C-ECTF-21/ 25081

Queensland Health

Dear Colleagues

Queensland Health continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation in Queensland and nationally to determine whether further changes are required to health directions or other arrangements that may be in place to reduce the potential impact and risk of COVID-19 in Queensland. This includes in relation to the emergence of any new variants of COVID-19.

Queensland Health is providing further advice on escalated use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), given the recent community COVID-19 cases and community transmission. These precautions are intended to limit the further spread of this variant in the community and allow an assessment of risk of any further exposure in the community.

As of 3 pm, 22 December 2021, the following settings have now been determined by the Chief Health Officer to be in the 'high' risk category.

The below settings across Queensland Health are to escalate use of PPE to 'high' risk category, including:

- Emergency Departments;
- Queensland Ambulance Service and;
- Queensland Health Vaccination Clinics.

Please note that this PPE guidance is additional to, and does not replace, the CHO directives that have been formally issued, and for which compliance is mandatory. The PPE escalation will remain in place until notification that it has been rescinded by the Chief Health Officer. PPE escalation guidance documents are attached for your reference. This guidance sets out which PPE should be used in three categories of community risk – low, moderate and high. Please also check the Queensland Health PPE website for the most current PPE guidance, accessible at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/novel-coronavirus-qld-clinicians/personal-protective-equipment-ppe>.

In application of the PPE guidance, the Chief Health Officer has the responsibility to determine which level of risk is applicable in a LGA or other specified geographic area. Queensland Health facilities, residential aged care facilities, and disability accommodation services are required to comply with implementation of this guidance. For entities external to Queensland Health, a decision on whether to follow the PPE protocols in the Guidance for health services will then rest with the responsible Chief Executive or equivalent for that entity, except where a Directive requires use of PPE.

Further information for clinicians regarding Queensland Health's response to COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/novel-coronavirus-qld-clinicians>.

Queensland Health, with wide consultation has produced various guidance to assist in health care providers to make decision about the infection prevention and control management of patients, residents and clients during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidance documents are current and have been updated as evidence has evolved. The Chief Health Officer Public Health Directions prevail where there is any difference between the guidance and the directions. Please use the following information to access this guidance:

overarching infection prevention and control for COVID-19 can be found at this website address: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0038/939656/gh-covid-19-Infection-control-guidelines.pdf.

guidance for the aged care sector is found on the Queensland Health website at this address: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/novel-coronavirus-qld-clinicians/aged-care-sector>.

Chief Health Officer public health directions are found here: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers>.

Queensland Health appreciates your organisation's continued efforts in working under challenging circumstances arising from the impacts of COVID-19 on the Queensland community. Queensland Health recognises the short notice given regarding these changes, and acknowledges your organisation's and its members' responsiveness. However, a quick response to the latest circumstances is considered an important measure to contain any further exposure and to avoid further restrictions.

Yours sincerely



JANE HANCOCK
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22/12/2021