Monday 18 January 2021

Good afternoon,

Epidemiology

- Six days have now passed without any community transmission of COVID-19 in Queensland. There are currently 25 active cases, all being managed as hospital inpatients.
- The number of COVID-19 related deaths recently surpassed two million worldwide. I would like to share the following, personal reflection by a Public Health Medical Director from a Queensland HHS:

> "As the world passes the milestone of more than 2 million deaths due to COVID19 and we are one year into the pandemic, it is timely to reflect on the scale of the annual mortality rate. To put these 2 million deaths in perspective, in 2019, the top three causes of deaths globally were non-communicable diseases acquired largely through lifestyle. The fourth was a broad category of lower respiratory infections (a mix of respiratory infections with a major paediatric burden). This last group accounted for approximately 2.4 million deaths in 2019. This means COVID19 [caused nearly as many deaths] in one year as all respiratory infections put together. While this number of deaths does not immediately compare with the estimated loss of life due to the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic (over 50 million) or the estimated 5 million children under-5s who died globally in 2019 due to preventable and treatable causes, the death toll due to COVID19 so far is only a hint at the level of destructive effects originating from this current pandemic. We know from previous pandemics and outbreaks (1918-1919 influenza, SARS, Ebola etc) that the real, indirect impact on livelihood, food supply, health systems at a global level will not be fully understood for some time. This may be even more challenging for us to grasp from the safe yet fragile standpoint we have all worked hard to secure here in Australia’".

Directions

- From 12am, 16 January 2021, updates to the Aged Care Direction (No. 21), Hospital Visitors Direction (No. 15) and Disability Accommodation Services Direction (No. 12) came into effect. The Directions have been updated to enable people who have been in Greater Brisbane on or after 2 January 2021 to enter a residential aged care facility, disability accommodation or hospital for an end of life visit without an exemption from the Chief Health Officer.
- Greater Brisbane was removed as a ‘hot spot’ by the Commonwealth on 17 January 2021.

COVID-19 vaccination program

- The Australian Academy of Science recently issued a statement about COVID-19 vaccination in response to misinformation.
- This article clearly describes the difference between vaccine efficacy and effectiveness.
- The Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Act will be amended to make reporting of COVID-19 vaccination administration mandatory. The revised Act will likely only come into effect in March, but the spirit of the Act will be honored from the start of the Vaccine Program.
- The COVID-19 vaccines cannot be co-administered with other vaccines – at least at this time. It is also unclear what interval is appropriate between the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines.
Conflicting guidance suggests 7 or 14 days. Both issues will be clarified before the program is implemented.

**Inspirational thought**

With the recent proliferation of misinformation, I enjoyed this popular meme: ‘*We are all born ignorant, but one must work hard to remain stupid*’. In keeping with the sentiment, the quote is often and incorrectly attributed to the late Benjamin Franklin.

Kind regards,
Carl

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**About this Document:**

- This document was an e-mail sent to a wide range of primary care staff and clinicians. The content is related to COVID-19 and the Queensland response and is intended for the free use and wide dissemination by the recipients or anyone else who access this webpage.
- Every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate and up-to-date. If you become aware of any issues, please notify us so we can amend our documents.
- Please provide any feedback or contact us using our e-mail COVID19-PC@health.qld.gov.au. Please note that the inbox is not continuously monitored, and we may not be able to respond to every message.