

NIHRACS Medical Superintendent update 11 June 2020

The pandemic situation on the mainland is starting to ease and the risk of person to person spread in the community is reduced. As everyone is aware there have, however, been large rallies on the mainland which mean that there is a possible increased risk of COVID spread among those people who participated. That effect may only be apparent in the next 2-3 weeks. The risk is still higher for persons travelling from overseas and in states where there are still cases appearing. Incoming passengers to the mainland will still be required to quarantine in a hotel for 14 days before coming to Norfolk.

Current state in South East Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) and NSW

As at 8 June 2020, the total number of COVID-19 cases in NSW was 3,114, with 66 being treated by NSW Health. There were two new cases since the 24 hours prior. Both of the new cases are travellers in hotel quarantine. In NSW 2,729, people have recovered from COVID-19. Nearly 576,000 people have now been tested for COVID-19 in NSW. The total number of confirmed cases in SESLHD was 686. Of these, 97 per cent have recovered from COVID-19.

Changes to policy on Norfolk Island

As we move into a Recovery Phase of the State of Emergency, there may be some changes to policy for returning residents, visitors and essential workers. Whatever these changes may be, I would like to appeal to travellers to Norfolk to be fully aware of the risk they pose to this community from the outside. Whatever the rules, they should also take personal and social responsibility to protect others. They should follow the assumption that they may be infected with COVID until the 14 day period after their arrival has elapsed. There are many aged and at risk people in our community and it is the responsibility of us all to protect them.

Essential personnel coming to the island will still be required to submit a work plan proposal and incoming passengers will be required to apply to come to Norfolk via the Incident Controller.

Changes to visitor policy at NIHRACS

The Ministry of Health, Australia has released the COVID-19 Model Procedure for Visitors for Local Health Districts. Changes to the visitor policy, with some restrictions, mean that up to two (2) visitors are permitted and there may be different people visiting at different time intervals. Face masks need to be worn when visiting acute or aged care patients. NIHRACS, however, will not allow persons who have arrived on Norfolk in the 14 days prior, to visit at the hospital. This may be waived on application to the Manager for palliative care patients.

The current door screening and criteria for admission to NIHRACS will continue to limit the entry for any visitor irrespective of the reason for a visit. We request that patients call ahead of coming to the hospital or GP clinic (except in an emergency) as we can still do telephone consultations. This is particularly important for people who have arrived on Norfolk in the 14 days prior.

Testing of people recovered from COVID-19

NIHRACS has limited ability to test swabs on-site. As we have limited stock of the cartridges used for testing, we will be using on-site testing for clinical situations where immediate results are required. Most patients will therefore still have their tests sent Sydney or Brisbane on the first available flight. We will also only be testing symptomatic patients and will advise self- isolation on medical grounds until a

test result is received. If they are considered high risk others who have been in contact with that person may also need to be isolated.

Maintaining infection control measures

The Ministry of Health has provided some advice to workplaces which are beginning to see increased numbers of staff returning to office work spaces. To maintain a safe workplace, please remember to:

- Regularly use hand sanitiser, particularly when you enter the building
- Wipe down your keyboard, desk and phone at the start and end of each day
- Wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face

As always, please utilise the [NSW Health website](#), the [NSW Government's site](#), and the [Commonwealth's Department of Health site](#) for the latest information.

Thank you for your assistance with this. The health of all in our community depends on a "team" effort

Dr Michelle Bonnici
Medical Superintendent
NIHRACS

Men's Health Week 15 – 21 June

Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions we are not able to offer community based Men's Health checks this year. We are instead encouraging men to book an appointment with your GP for a comprehensive men's health check. See the poster below for 7 health facts that men need to know:

General Practice Clinic Update

Due to the current restrictions due to the risk of COVID-19 the main entry to NIHRACS is currently locked however the General Practice clinic is still open for business for all your health care needs and our emergency department is still operating. To decrease the risk of COVID-19 our processes have changed and Medicare is providing funding for telephone consultations where our Doctors can provide their services without you having to present to NIHRACS. If the assessing Doctor decides you need further medical intervention they will inform you on what to do next. To book appointments please phone our reception on 24134. Please continue to help us to reduce the risks of coronavirus on our small community by taking advantage of our telehealth services.

Hours of Operation

Monday- Friday 8.30am – 5pm

Saturday & Sunday Closed

Please note the clinic is closed for lunch from 12.30 – 1.30pm.

Please call 24134 for appointments only during opening hours.

If you require medical assistance outside business hours please phone the hospital on 22091. In cases of emergency please dial 000.

Child Health Clinic

Child Health Clinic will now be run from the GP Clinic every Thursday, 8:30am to 4pm by Janine. This clinic is for 0 – 5 year olds and includes: Developmental Assessment, Baby Growth Checks, Emotional and Social Development, Breastfeeding Support, Settling/Sleep Support and Introducing solids.

Smoking Cessation Clinic

It's hard to stop, but with help and support, you **can** quit smoking.

Quitting smoking can be one of the most difficult, yet rewarding, things a person can do. Most smokers say they would like to quit, and may have tried at least once. Some are successful the first time, but others try a number of times before they finally give up for good.

It might take time, it can be hard as your body breaks its dependence on nicotine, but many people have succeeded in giving up smoking. Become one of them by making a quit plan.

The clinic will provide a proven approach to assisting people who wish to either quit smoking or cut down. Every cigarette not smoked is doing good for smokers' health. The clinic uses a multidisciplinary approach to match individual needs.

To make a booking for the smoking cessation clinic call the GP Clinic on 24134.

All patient information is treated as confidential.

Physiotherapy relocation

The Physiotherapy department has now relocated to an area at the back of the hospital. On booking your appointment staff will inform you of how to access the new location. Bookings are now being made by the GP reception staff and all referrals must be generated from a GP visit.

We thank you for your support and understanding.

Advice for family and friends visiting Residents in Aged Care

COVID-19 is a major health risk for older people. The current visiting restrictions are there to protect our residents. Please note the following:

Please do not visit the Aged Care facility (Dar Randa) if you have:

- Returned to Norfolk in the last 14 days
- Been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have a fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath

If you wish to visit Dar Randa you will be asked questions related to the above as we are required to ask them of everyone entering the facility, including staff.

Other important notes for visitors of Dar Randa:

- Only one visitor for each Resident is allowed
- Visits should be kept short
- Visitors are required to wear a face mask
- Visits are to be held in the Resident's room, outdoors or in an area advised by staff
- All visitors must have had their influenza vaccination
- No group social activities, school or early childhood visits nor entertainment are allowed at present

You are most welcome to call your family member or friend or send a card or letter.

Many thanks for your understanding.

Health and Wellbeing Messaging Weekly Update

A reminder of the key COVID-19 prevention messages:

- Physical distancing
- Stop any Spread – hygiene
- Look after yourself and others
- Know the symptoms

Importance of self-care

Self-care is important at the best of times, but If you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed at present it becomes even more important, Here are some self-care ideas:

- Stay active
- Take 10 to be zen (practice mindfulness)
- Chat with your mates
- Make a homemade meal

- Take a break from the news
- Make a music playlist
- Declutter for five minutes
- Watch or read something uplifting
- Learn something new.

Source: Reach Out website: <https://au.reachout.com/>



Three steps for COVID-19 protective house cleaning

Have a look at this Qld Health poster for advice on house cleaning

