

 Tasmanian Government	THIS IS AN ALERT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ALL DOCTORS IN THIS PRACTICE		
	Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit		
9 April 2020	No. of pages (incl. this page): 1	Phone: 1800 671 738	Fax: 6173 0821

COVID-19 Update No. 31

This alert updates the 8 April 2020 COVID-19 ALERT.

- **The North-West has been designated as a geographical localised area with risk of community transmission.**
 - An Outbreak Management Team, led by the THS with assistance from PHS, is investigating and managing 23 cases associated with the North-West Regional Hospital (NWRH) and the North-West Private Hospital (NWPB). 15 of these cases are healthcare workers.
 - GPs in the North-West and other areas of Tasmania are asked to help identify any cases of possible community transmission related to the outbreak.
 - GPs in the North-West should refer all patients who are living in, or travelled through this region, presenting with fever OR other COVID-19 symptoms, for testing.
 - If GPs have access to appropriate PPE, swabs and transport media, swabs can be collected in the GP surgery and forwarded through their routine pathology provider.
 - Patients deemed as high risk, having either been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 or recently visited the North West Regional Hospital or Mersey Community Hospital, should preferably be referred through the THS Respiratory Clinic to assist with timeliness of results.
 - Patients presenting to GPs outside the North-West region, but who have recently lived or travelled through the North-West region, should also be referred for testing in-line with current criteria.
 - All patients tested for COVID-19 must be advised to remain in isolation until provided with their results.
 - See attached GP Info sheet (V12) for changes to the suspect case definition in the SoNG, released 6/4/2020.
 - As at 6.00pm 8 April 2020, the total number of cases diagnosed in Tasmania is 107. There have been three deaths in Tasmania. 48 people have been cleared of the virus and are no longer in isolation. As at 9 April 2020, there have been more than 3795 laboratory tests performed in Tasmania.
 - From **Wednesday April 15 2020**, referrals for specimen collection for patients who meet the suspected case criteria for COVID-19 will only be available through the THS Respiratory clinics.
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- The current focus of the public health response remains to delay widespread community transmission in Tasmania, through rapid response, investigation and increased testing in areas where community transmission may be suspected.
 - The Australian Government has enabled GPs to use telehealth for consultations with patients.

What to do:

- Review Primary Health Tasmania's [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) for COVID-19 (username: connectingcare and password: health) for more information about the referral pathways, referral forms and general practice preparedness.
- **Use the COVID-19 GP Info Sheet V12 when managing suspected cases.**
- Monitor your own health, being alert to signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Please see advice attached for testing in residential aged care facilities.

Further information:

- For state updates go to www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au.
- For PPE instructional videos for healthcare workers, go to www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/tasmanian_infection_prevention_and_control_unit/healthcare_worker_education/.
- For national updates, including national case numbers, go to www.health.gov.au.
- For international updates, go to www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus.

Testing centres will be open over the Easter holiday period and the Public Health Hotline will be operating as normal.

Unless urgent new information, COVID-19 updates will not be sent on Friday, 10 April, Sunday 12 April or Monday 13 April.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Dr Julie Graham, Specialist Medical Advisor, Public Health Services.