

 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		
14 April 2020	No. of pages (incl. this page): 1	Phone: 1800 671 738	Fax: 6173 0821

COVID-19 Update No. 33

This alert updates the 11 April 2020 COVID-19 ALERT.

- An outbreak in the North West related to the North-West Regional Hospital (NWRH) and the North-West Private Hospital (NWPH) is being investigated and managed. There are 66 cases associated with this outbreak.
- The North-West has been designated a geographical localised area with risk of community transmission.**
- The North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) and North West Private Hospital (NWPH) are closed to protect the health of patients, staff and the north west community. Inpatients have been transferred to other health facilities, with appropriate infection control procedures. Patients requiring emergency care are being transported to other hospitals as appropriate.
- All staff (and students) who have worked in the NWRH or NWPH since 27 March, and their household members, must self-quarantine for 14 days from the day the staff member completed their last shift. Quarantined staff are being offered testing.
- All patients discharged from the NWRH or NWPH since 27 March, and their household members, must self-quarantine for 14 days from the day of discharge.
- Anyone who has visited the NWRH or NWPH in the last 14 days should continue social distancing and monitor themselves for signs of fever and respiratory symptoms including cough, sore throat, shortness of breath.

Please help identify possible cases in and from the North-West.

- GPs in the North West:** Test or refer for testing all patients presenting with fever or acute respiratory infection, including cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.
- GPs in the North and South:** Test or refer for testing all patients with fever or acute respiratory infection, including cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, who have spent time in the North West in the previous 14 days, or who meet other epidemiological criteria for testing, as per the Information for General Practice sheet (v12).
- For patients who recently had contact with a known case or spent time (as a patient, staff member or visitor) in the NWRH, NWPH or the Mersey Community Hospital, please refer for testing through the THS Respiratory Clinics (for timely results).
- For other patients, either collect swabs in your surgery (if there is access to appropriate PPE, swabs and transport media) and forward through your routine pathology provider or refer for testing at THS Respiratory Clinics.
- Please instruct all patients tested for COVID-19 to self-isolate at home until results are provided.**
- From Wednesday 15 April, Hobart, Launceston and North West Pathology will no longer collect specimens for COVID-19 testing; all referrals for specimen collection will need to go to THS Respiratory Clinics.**
- The Department of Health is seeking expressions of interest from doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals to register for a surge workforce for emerging staffing pressures. See www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/news/2020/expressions_of_interest_covid-19_staffing

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- As at 6:00 pm 13 April 2020, there have been 150 cases confirmed in Tasmania and five deaths. 66 infections were acquired locally and 9 are being investigated to determine the source of infection. 57 people have been cleared the virus and are no longer in isolation. 395 'close contacts' are self-isolating and being monitored. There have been 4,502 tests conducted.
 - The 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.

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 assessing and managing patients.**
- Monitor your health and the health of your staff; be alert to signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Review advice sent on 9 April about 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 and case numbers, go to www.health.gov.au.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and support.

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