

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

COVID-19 Update No. 36

This alert updates the 16 April 2020 COVID-19 ALERT.

- Public Health Services is working with three aged care facilities, Eliza Purton Home in Ulverstone, Coroneagh Park Nursing Home in Penguin and Melaleuca Home for the Aged in Devonport, after contact tracing found that a healthcare worker diagnosed with coronavirus had worked shifts at both the North-West Regional Hospital (NWRH) and the North-West Private Hospital (NWPB) and the three nursing homes. The Commonwealth government have arranged for testing of all staff and residents at the nursing homes.
- The outbreak in the North-West related to the NWRH and the NWPB is being investigated and managed. There are currently 95 cases associated with this outbreak.
- The North-West has been designated a geographical localised area with risk of community transmission.**
- The NWRH and NWPB 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. The Emergency department at the NWRH will resume operating over the coming days staffed by AUSMAT and Defence personnel.
- All staff (and students) who have worked in the NWRH or NWPB since 27 March, and their household members, must self-quarantine for 14 days from the day of the staff member's last shift. **Quarantined staff are being offered testing.**
- All patients discharged from the NWRH or NWPB 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 NWPB 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. If they develop symptoms they should be tested.

Please help identify possible cases in and from the North-West. There is increased testing capacity (up to 500 per day).

- GPs in the North-West:** Any patient presenting with fever or acute respiratory infection, including cough, sore throat or shortness of breath = **test or refer for testing at a THS Respiratory Clinic.** There is now a drive through testing facility in Burnie. Patients can be referred through the normal pathway.
- GPs in the North and South:** Any patient with fever or acute respiratory infection, including cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, who has spent time in the North-West in the previous 14 days = **test or refer for testing at a THS Respiratory Clinic.**
- Continue to test or refer for testing **at a THS Respiratory Clinic** patients who meet 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, NWPB 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.**

- As at 6:00 pm 16 April 2020, there have been 180 cases confirmed in Tasmania and six deaths. 97 infections were acquired locally. There have been 5,076 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 national updates and case numbers, go to www.health.gov.au
- For PPE instructional videos for healthcare workers, go to www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and support.

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