

Dear Colleagues

As you would be aware, Queensland Health continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation in Queensland and nationally to determine whether changes are required to health directions or other arrangements that may be in place to reduce the potential impact and risk of COVID-19 in Queensland.

From noon on 26 March 2021, the Queensland Government instituted heightened precautions in response to a case of community transmission being identified. These precautions are intended to limit the further spread of this variant in the community and allow an assessment of risk of any further exposure in the community.

In order to assist with the efforts to limit spread, Queensland Health is providing advice on escalated use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE escalation guidance documents are attached for your reference. This guidance sets out which PPE should be used in three categories of community risk – low, moderate and high.

In application of the PPE guidance, the Chief Health Officer has the responsibility to determine which level of risk is applicable in a Local Government Area (LGA) or other specified geographic area. Queensland Health facilities, residential aged care facilities, and disability accommodation services are required to comply with implementation of this guidance. For entities external to Queensland Health, a decision on whether to follow the PPE protocols in the Guidance for health services will then rest with the responsible Chief Executive or equivalent for that entity, except where a Directive requires use of PPE (such as for residential aged care facilities).

The following Local Government Areas (LGAs) have now been determined by the Chief Health Officer to be in the “moderate” risk category.

- City of Brisbane
- Moreton Bay Region

All other LGAs remain in the ‘low’ risk category.

All health and care settings are to escalate use of PPE, including:

- Hospitals
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Residential Aged Care Facilities
- Residential Disability Care Facilities
- Prison Health Services
- Youth detention health services
- Community health care settings (including general practice, dentistry and home care settings)

In addition to these specific settings, clinicians and non-clinical personnel who live or work in the affected areas who also work in other facilities or areas outside the escalated LGAs should follow the requirement for escalated PPE.

Please note that this PPE guidance is additional to and does not replace the CHO directives that have been formally issued, and for which compliance is mandatory. The PPE escalation will remain in place until notification that it has been rescinded by the Chief Health Officer.

Further information for clinicians regarding Queensland Health's response to COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/novel-coronavirus-qld-clinicians>.

Queensland Health appreciates your organisation's continued efforts in working under challenging circumstances arising from the impacts of COVID-19 on the Queensland community. Queensland Health recognises the short notice given regarding these changes and acknowledges your organisation's and its members' responsiveness but a quick response to the latest circumstances is considered an important measure to contain any further exposure and to avoid further restrictions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Farmer', written in a cursive style.

DR JILLANN FARMER
Deputy Director-General
Clinical Excellence Queensland
26/03/2021