



15 April 2020

Preparedness for COVID-19 at Northern Beaches Hospital

Dear GP,

During the last four weeks we have seen an enormous amount of preparation for COVID-19 across our clinical services and with that some significant operational changes throughout the hospital.

The hospital's Incident Management Team continues to meet twice daily. We have now implemented Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Pandemic Sub-Plan and are busy preparing for Phases 3 & 4 with ongoing detailed planning for clinical and non-clinical operations.

Phase 1:

- COVID-19 clinic continues to run daily with community and staff being tested. Turn-around time for test results has dramatically improved with more laboratory capacity across the system, with many results now back within 24 hours.
- Triage of all ED presentations and streaming of patients into the Respiratory Assessment Pod if COVID+/COVID suspect.
- COVID Intubation team comprising Anaesthetics/ICU/ED doctors and staff.

Phase 2:

- Designated COVID Pod on 4C – with a dedicated medical (SMOs and JMOs) and nursing team to look after COVID+/COVID suspect patients 7 days per week.
- COVID ICU – designated pod for COVID patients requiring ventilation and/or critical care support.
- ED Fast Track relocated to the hospital's Medical Centre.

Phase 3 & 4:

- Clinic Operations Sub-Incident Management's Team established to continue focused planning for the expansion of ward and critical care pods as part of upscaling our response across the three streams of COVID patients.
- Expansion of ICU beds
- Ward based care expansion.





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Clinical Services Update:

The hospital has commenced the roll out of a number of strategies across different services to consider the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and our staff and to help ensure our services can respond comprehensively to COVID-19 and provide care to critically ill patients.

Surgery:

Since 1 April 2020, only Cat 1 and urgent Cat 2 procedures are being undertaken at the hospital in line with the Premier's directive. As from 6 April 2020, our interventional suite will be running a reduced service with five operating theatres, one cardiac cath lab and a procedure room running a mixture of consolidated surgical operating lists.

This is an uncertain and unprecedented time for surgical services across the state and there are ongoing discussions with our partner hospitals to ensure we can assist and manage current and future workloads at the hospital, the Local Health District and across the Healthscope group. We will keep you informed if there are any changes to interventional services, as and when they happen in future fax out updates.

Outpatient Services:

The hospital has started to implement strategies to manage the activity in outpatient services. Only essential services will continue and the majority of our outpatient clinics are to be temporarily suspended until further notice.

For those clinics that are continuing, only the most urgent patients should be booked into outpatient clinics and face to face appointments should be limited to those deemed absolutely necessary, the rest done by Telehealth or telephone. Follow up appointments for these urgent patients should also be done by Telehealth where possible.

Those clinicians affected by these changes have been notified and we will continue to work with departments to look for alternative models of care during this period.

We will provide a fax out update on outpatient services.

Training and Education:

MDT training and education, including SIM sessions are continuing for Intubation, Rapid Response and CERS scenarios for COVID-19 patients in the Education Centre. In addition, we are currently up-skilling and training a significant number of nursing staff as part of the preparation for expansion of critical care.

You can find a video at www.wevideo.com/view/1647412202 prepared by our lead clinicians in the COVID-19 teams providing an overview of the disease process, how we are managing cases, the principles of patient flows and current treatments, trials and research finishing with an overview of the





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Pandemic Sub-Plan for the hospital.

In the coming weeks, we will fax key information to you, which will also be uploaded to our website – www.northernbeacheshospital.com.au Topics include outpatient clinics, maternity, mental health and other key services in the hospital.

Please email GP Liaison Nicola Pellegrini at nicola.pellegrini@healthscope.com.au if you have any specific questions or if you have suggestions for further GP updates.

Regards,

Dr Peter Thomas
Director Medical Services
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