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Northern Beaches Hospital urges staff to take leave before coronavirus peak hits

Northern Beaches Hospital is encouraging staff to take time off before the peak of the pandemic, as a source reveals when that might be.

Julie Cross, Manly Daily

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 Andrew Newton, new CEO of Northern Beaches Hospital. Picture: Supplied.

The peak of the COVID-19 crisis on the northern beaches is expected to start from late April and continue through to June, according to a hospital source.

Management at the privately-run Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest is encouraging staff to take leave now to ensure they are rested before the influx of patients.

“At this stage, we believe that late April to June will be our busiest time and we need to ensure that the team is fresh and ready to take on the tasks ahead,” a source said.



 Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest showing signage for the new system for COVID-19 testing (AAP Image / Julian Andrews).

It comes as the chief executive officer Andrew Newton wrote a letter to the northern beaches community asking for people to follow social distancing, stay at home and to maintain good hand hygiene.

“As the proud CEO of the Northern Beaches Hospital I can say that our staff are doing their utmost to assess and treat many people each day, but they cannot do so unassisted,” he wrote.

“We are all in this together and we must all play our part.

“The COVID pandemic could be a prolonged period so having the support of locals will help give our team the stamina needed to get through this professionally and personally.”

Mr Newton said many individuals and groups have shown support to the hospital via letter/card or by dropping off sandwiches or lollies for the staff.

“We are appreciative of the support being received by you all across the northern beaches,” he said.

“No matter what their role at the hospital, all staff have my full confidence that they are doing their utmost to help locals.”



 Pictured (L-R) are: Chief Operating Officer, Paul Darcy Director of Medical Services, Peter Thomas, Director of Nursing, Fiona Allsop (AAP Image / Julian Andrews).

Earlier this week Dr Peter Thomas told the *Manly Daily* that the hospital and staff are prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said the hospital has the capacity to more than double its number of ventilators to 50.

He also said staff had been training and undertaking simulation exercises for different pandemic scenarios every day in preparation for what's to come.

Dr Thomas also reiterated Mr Newton's plea for the community to abide by social distancing rules and hand hygiene, as well as calling out people who are breaking the rules.

“The potential impact on the hospital, workforce and without doubt the community is unprecedented,” Dr Thomas said.

“This affects the whole community. To protect the more vulnerable we need to call out bad behaviour, keep ourselves social distancing, look after family and friends and hand hygiene.”