PHEOC BULLETIN #35

Tuesday 10 November 2020 14:00 Hours

This bulletin has been authorised by the PHEOC Deputy Coordinator, Dr Revle Bangor-Jones

COVID-19 Case numbers

- As of 10 November 2020, there have been 778 confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified in Western Australia (WA) and 39 historical cases. 757 people have recovered.
- To date a total of 508,425 positive and negative COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.
- **WA:** Daily snapshot
- **National:** Current National Status
- **Worldwide**: WHO Situation Reports & WHO Dashboard

Living with COVID – get tested

As we ease restrictions, it is critical that Western Australia maintains our high rates of testing which have been central to our success in limiting the spread of the virus and enabling relaxation of restrictions. It is critical that people continue to come forward for testing and practise COVID-safe behaviours when out and about and catching up with family and friends.

Having high numbers of people getting tested allows us to detect cases in the community earlier and prevent onward transmission. People should get tested at the first sign of the mildest of symptoms.

Community

Controlled interstate border

With just days before changes to Western Australia's hard borders, work is intensifying to ensure every precaution is in place to keep the community COVID-19 safe. Since the start of the year, the WA health system has been assessing, preparing and reassessing its capabilities in response to COVID-19 – learning and re-evaluating based on world events. The Department of Health is working with Government agencies and airlines to prepare for the controlled border changes and the expected influx of arrivals into the State from 14 November.

WA Health nursing staff will be boosted at Perth Airport to meet demands of increased passenger arrivals and preparations at Perth Airport are underway to ensure that passenger arrival processes are seamless. This includes identifying the use of suitable terminals and gates at Perth Airport for the arrival of passengers from very low risk (Category 1) and low risk states (Category 2), ensuring infection control processes are in place as well as steps to prevent co-mingling between the two categories of arrivals. Health screening of passengers will continue for all arriving passengers. COVID-19 testing will be available at the airport for those who fail health screens; and for any other arrivals who would like to be tested.

Passengers arriving from Category 2 states (currently Victoria and New South Wales) are still required to self-quarantine for 14 days and must attend a COVID clinic for a test on day 11.

COVID-19 wastewater testing program update

Western Australia's wastewater testing for COVID-19 has commenced, following extensive scientific preparation and analysis. The testing is a collaboration between the Department of Health, PathWest and the Water Corporation.

The best available techniques and equipment have been used so that we can provide the most technically advanced testing methods, ensuring that the science and objectives help inform WA's response to COVID-19. The initial tests were performed on previously collected (historical) samples from a wastewater catchment area where positive cases of COVID-19 were residing at the time.

While there are still unknowns in relation to the duration of faecal shedding of COVID-19, the initial samples tested have shown some positive results, indicating that the COVID-19 virus can be detected in wastewater sampled from a catchment area with positive cases. It is important to note that these tests on historical samples detect fragments of the COVID-19 virus. The virus is not live in the water and a positive result does not indicate any current community COVID-19 cases.

The focus will now turn to testing of fresh samples collected from this week, to assist with ongoing surveillance for the virus in our communities.

DoH Forward Planning

The WA Health Department has developed comprehensive outbreak management plans covering a myriad of settings, including aged care facilities, prisons, schools, hospitals, remote communities. Extensive stakeholder engagement has been undertaken in the desk top testing of the plans which include, but are not limited to, testing protocols, measures for isolation, treatment of those affected and lockdown parameters for individual outbreak circumstances in both metropolitan and regional scenarios. These plans are not currently available to the public.

There has also been significant work done in building up our contact tracing capacity, and reviewing lessons learned from other jurisdictions, including NSW and Victoria. The period of a lull in community COVID cases has been well-utilised as a period of intense preparation and preparedness.

New COVID-19 mental health campaign – How's your head today?
How's your head today? is a new national COVID-19 mental health campaign that urges people to prioritise their mental health, raise awareness about how to identify when something is wrong, and encourage people to seek help.

Phase 5 date postponed

The start date for Phase 5 is yet to be determined. See the WA Roadmap

Victoria and NSW Update

VICTORIA - Latest updates can be viewed HERE.
NSW - Latest updates can be viewed HERE.

Directions updates

COVID-19 State of Emergency Declarations and Community Advice summarises the latest COVID-19 Directions that are in place in WA. Further information can be found on WA Government website and the Directions FAQs.

Testing

General population testing criteria

Any person may be tested if they have any one of the following clinical criteria: fever (≥37.5⁰C) OR history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills), without a known source **OR** an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat, runny nose) **OR** acute loss of smell or taste.

Testing locations

Testing locations are listed on Healthy WA.

Reporting

Notify suspected COVID-19 cases by completing the notification form either ONLINE or by printing out the notification form.

The Presentation for Testing Fact Sheet has been updated.

Series of National Guidelines (SoNG)

The latest iteration was released on 28 October 2020.

Business and Industry

See latest updates about how the Western Australian Government is supporting business and industry economic recovery through COVID-19.

A new document has been released to provide guidance for short term accommodation providers who wish to provide accommodation for guests in quarantine or isolation. Please note the guidelines are a standalone, unenforceable document and that there is no legal requirement for a person isolating or quarantining to notify the management of a premise of their status.

Standard for hotels providing accommodation for guests in quarantine or isolation.

Resources for more information

- Latest Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) News
- WA Department of Health; HealthyWA
- Department of Health Media Releases
- Australian Government Health Department
- Advice for the public (WHO)
- Advice in other languages and Translated Resources
- Advice for Aboriginal people

Who to contact for more information

- COVID-19 Clinic ONLY Test Results Enquiry Line: 1800 313 223 (Note: **NOT** for GP referred testing or private pathology clinic tests)
- COVID-19 WA Public Information Line: 132 6843 (13 COVID)
- COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Exemption Application: Visit the G2G PASS website or complete the exemption application form
- COVID-19 WA Police Line: 131 444 To report breaches of: self-isolation, business closures, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions.

Next advice - The PHEOC Bulletin is issued weekly. Next issue: Tuesday 17 November 2020.

Last updated 10 November 2020

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2020

health.wa.gov.au