

Dear Chief Executives,

NSW Health to remain on Red Alert Level with some restrictions to be lifted for mask-wearing and new guidance for screening of visitors

The Risk Escalation Panel has determined that the levels of transmission in the community warrant maintenance of Red Level Alert in line with the [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#).

This advice means all LHDs and Specialty Health Networks across NSW remain under red alert level directions until further notice.

All staff working in public health services and multipurpose services across NSW are directed to maintain PPE precautions in accordance with the red alert level set out in the [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#).

In relation to mask-wearing, the Panel recommends that surgical masks should be worn by all staff who work across any NSW Health campus that provides healthcare services. A P2/N95 respirator is required when providing direct care for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and close contacts of a COVID-19 case as determined by public health.

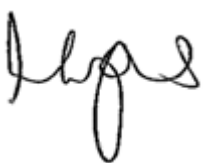
Mask-wearing is no longer required in discrete corporate offices and non-healthcare settings that are not part of a healthcare campus. All other precautions are to remain in place including distancing.

Regarding screening of visitors to NSW Health healthcare settings, the Panel has endorsed the attached guidance, revised in consultation with Public Health Response Branch and Clinical Excellence Commission. The screening criteria has been streamlined to three core questions related to QR code check-in; vaccination status; and symptom check. Other questions about areas of concern have been eliminated to make the process as simple as possible.

Visitor guidance remains the same in that two fully vaccinated people (at least 12 years of age) may visit a patient per day; and correct mask wearing must be in place throughout the visit and while in the healthcare facility.

The Risk Escalation Panel will continue to monitor changes in case numbers in LHDs and will issue further advice when required.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nigel Lyons
Deputy Secretary, Health System Strategy and Planning
22 October 2021