



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
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C-ECTF-21/365

Mr Aenghas Hopkinson-Pearson
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Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland
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Dear Mr Hopkinson-Pearson

Thank you for your letter dated 8 January 2021 regarding the supply and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic and Queensland Health's COVID-19 vaccination preparations.

I acknowledge the contribution of Queensland nurses in maintaining delivery of quality health care services during the pandemic and express my appreciation of their commitment and expertise at all levels of Queensland's pandemic response.

Protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of staff is critical as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Queensland Health's *Interim infection prevention and control guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings* provides information for staff working in Queensland Health services and those working in Queensland's licensed private health facilities.

Queensland Health has developed Pandemic Response PPE guidance documents for various care contexts including acute care, residential care and disability accommodation, community health services and correctional services. These resources include specific guides such as 'PPE quick reference guide', 'properties of PPE for use in healthcare', 'safe fitting and removal of PPE' and 'fit check for P2/N95 respirator'.

The *Pandemic Response Guidance - Personal Protective Equipment in healthcare delivery* provides recommendations for PPE use in low, moderate and high risk scenarios. The guidance sets out when various PPE, including P2/N95 respirators, are to be used. The escalation of PPE aims to minimise the risk of acquisition of COVID-19 infection for health care workers, patients and visitors to healthcare settings. This guide is based on currently available information about COVID-19.

The documents referred to above and additional information for Queensland clinicians are available at [COVID-19 information for Queensland clinicians | Queensland Health](#). Queensland Health's infection control recommendations align with the expert national advice provided by the [Communicable Diseases Network Australia \(CDNA\)](#) and the [Infection Control Expert Group](#). These national groups regularly review the evidence for COVID-19 transmission, including emerging variants of concern.

The CDNA's National Guidelines can be found on the Australian Government Department of Health website at <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel->

[coronavirus.htm](#). Queensland Health also monitors infection prevention and control recommendations from reputable international sources such as the World Health Organisation.

Respiratory protection is a critical element of infection prevention and control programs. Sourcing and procurement of PPE, including P2/N95 respirators, is based on demand modelling activities that have been in place since the beginning of the pandemic. Procurement of PPE is adjusted depending on the current situation. Hospital and Health Services are allocated PPE, including P2/N95 respirators, based on these projections and this process is carefully managed and monitored on a weekly basis. These arrangements will help ensure that appropriate PPE is available to protect and maintain the safety of health care workers.

I am pleased to advise that Queensland's COVID-19 Vaccine Command Centre officially went live on 15 February 2021. The Vaccine Command Centre is responsible for the central coordination, communication, reporting and incident management of the Queensland Vaccination Program. Queensland's COVID-19 vaccine rollout commenced on 22 February 2021. The first phase of the rollout prioritised frontline health care and quarantine workers and aged care and disability care residents.

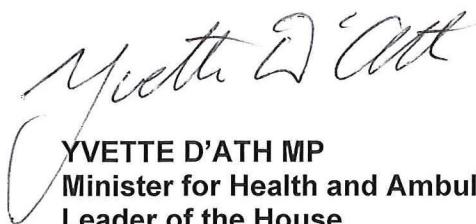
Registered nurses are playing a major role in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Queensland. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a special authority has been granted to certain healthcare workers, including registered nurses, to supply and administer the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with the *Drug Therapy Protocol - Communicable Diseases Program (DTP CDP)*. The DTP CDP came into effect on 27 March 2020 and will remain in effect for the duration of the declared public health emergency unless replaced or revoked earlier. The DTP CDP is available on the Queensland Health website <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/licences/medicines-poisons/legislation-standards/acts-regulation>.

The Australian Government has partnered with the Australian College of Nursing to develop and deliver free and accredited training modules for COVID-19 vaccination providers. Information about this training is available at <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-training-program>. Queensland Health requires staff involved in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout to complete mandatory training. Detailed COVID-19 vaccination program information, including Queensland Health's training requirements, is available at [COVID-19 information for Queensland clinicians | Queensland Health](#).

In relation to your enquiry about the number of active COVID-19 cases in Queensland, publicly available case information can be found at <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/statistics>.

Thank you again for writing to me. Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, I have arranged for the Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, on email ChiefNurse-Office@health.qld.gov.au, to be available to assist you.

Yours sincerely



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