



IMPORTANT: COVID-19 Updates

Date: 31 March 2020
To: All VMOs – Hospitals (ACT, Vic, Tas, NSW)
From: Kris Salisbury, National Director Clinical Governance | Dr Tony Hobbs, Chief Medical Advisor

This update provides all Calvary Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs) with an update to our previous communication dated 27 March 2020. This is an unprecedented, challenging time for all and we understand your concerns. Thank you for continuing to work with us through these changes.

Introducing Screening and Temperature Checks

In order to effectively manage the risk of infection and protect the health of patients, residents, their family members and staff, **Calvary is introducing routine screening and temperature checks of all persons upon entry from 12.00am (midnight) 2 April 2020.**

The following has been communicated to all staff:

- **All staff, VMOs, Contractors and Visitors** should be vetted with screening questions based on the existing documents and questions (clinical and travel - based on COVID-19 case definition).
- **All Staff, VMOs, Contractors and Visitors** should have a daily temperature check on entry to the building or facility. Protocol for handling a reading of 37.5 degrees Celsius or greater is outlined below.

What does this mean for VMOs with an elevated temperature?

An elevated temperature is one of the symptoms of COVID-19. If you return an elevated reading equal to or greater than 37.5 degrees Celsius, you will be requested to leave the facility and monitor your symptoms.

This is a precautionary measure. If you have any of the [symptoms of COVID-19](#), please consult your GP via the phone. If you do not have any symptoms, we request you monitor your health for the next few days. You will not be permitted back to the site until your temperature has returned to normal levels. We understand this may interfere with care of inpatients and would request you make alternative arrangements during this time.

Category 1 and Urgent Category 2 surgeries to be performed

National Cabinet has suspended semi urgent Category 2 and 3 elective surgeries in private hospitals from 11.59pm on 1 April 2020. We request that you review your current surgical lists to ensure that those patients who are most in need of surgery are completed from 1 April 2020. This will be limited to Category 1 and Urgent Category 2 surgeries and procedures.

The [National Elective Surgery Urgency Categorisation 2015](#) provides guidance and we require the use of these in decision-making. For guidance on gastroenterology procedures, the reference sources should be the [Gastroenterological Society of Australia \(GESA\) guidelines](#) for triage. For interventional cardiology, while not

specifically mentioned in the attached, the principles of the attached documents must be utilised to guide decision-making.

As always, this decision remains that of the treating medical practitioner and we will actively work with our medical practitioners to ensure that we all adhere to the Commonwealth guidelines in these challenging times. We appreciate this is a new operating environment for many of our private practitioners. We do ask that you work with our team's collegially to ensure we service those most in need in our community.

Please continue to work with the sites, particularly the peri-operative managers, to alter lists as required. As the relationship lies between the medical practitioner and the patient, we would request that your rooms contact the effected patients to inform them of the changes as they relate to them.

Restrictions for General Visitations

Calvary reminds our VMO partners that from 12.00 (midnight) 27 March 2020, all general visitation ceased in our Private Hospitals and Residential Aged Care Facilities.

We did not take this decision lightly. With the Department of Health and state and territory authorities reporting growing instances of community transmission of COVID-19, we acted quickly to introduce this measure to ensure the safest possible environment for the vulnerable people in our care and VMOs, GPs and staff.

Some exceptions to visitation may apply for obstetrics, paediatric and palliative patients.

Personal Protective Equipment

The limitation on supply of PPE including masks continues to be challenging as supply chains become more restricted and usage across the industry increases. We would like to remind you of the request to continue to minimise and extend the use of masks as appropriate

Consumer and Staff Communications

Calvary will continue to communicate with VMOs, GPs, staff, our patients, residents, clients and family members as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

Yesterday, Calvary released a new webpage which brings together all COVID-19 related material for staff use. Please visit this page regularly to stay up-to-date with all communications: www.calvarystaffupdates.org.au

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation in this difficult time. We will keep you informed of any further developments.

Please contact the relevant hospital if you have any questions or concerns.