

ANMF COVID-19 Newsflash: Calvary Lenah Valley and St. John's

Update on Investigation by WorkSafe Tasmania

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) met with Calvary management on 8 February 2022 to discuss concerns regarding Calvary's response to the COVID-19 Omicron variant, following the referral to WorkSafe by the ANMF.

The details of this meeting are as follows with the ANMF member concerns in *italics* and Calvary responses in **bold**.

1. *Fit testing and availability of a variety of N95 masks. Members have concerns of not being fit tested.*

WorkSafe has investigated the issues of fit testing at Calvary Hobart. To date 135 staff have been fit tested with 319 still to be done. IPM Consulting Pty Ltd. is continuing to fit test staff. There are 10 different types of masks to choose from, however there is a problem with supply on some of them. Fit checking is also an important part of correct mask fitting. Calvary is planning to appoint an internal Fit Tester and have trained some employees to assist to ensure more staff are tested in a timely way.

2. *Appropriate areas for donning and doffing of PPE, members have concerns that some areas are not appropriate.*

ED and 1st East Medical, the designated respiratory ward, are the only 2 areas with designated don and doffing stations. If there are specific concerns in any other areas these need to be investigated by management. Other areas are not considered sufficiently high risk areas for this to be implemented. Theatre and procedural areas don and doff with every patient. High risk areas, other than Theatre, are determined by the potential or likelihood of aerosol generating behaviours or procedures.

3. *Policies in place regarding COVID 19 testing and availability on site*

Calvary Hobart have drive through testing for patients and staff which operates Monday-Friday for approximately 8 hours per day. This is accessed via an online booking system. Staff can access testing if they are asymptomatic or a close contact. All patients are screened by phone call and PCR or RAT prior to admission. Day cases are RAT tested on day of admission. All ED and medical patients are RAT and PCR tested on admission.

4. *What are the policies and protocols in place for COVID 19 positive patients?*

The collaborative Hobart plan is not to have COVID positive patients in Calvary sites. Any that occur on or after admission will be transferred to the Royal Hobart Hospital. Contact tracing will be undertaken to identify close contacts, including patients, or any breaches in PPE in line with Public Health. Policies are readily accessible for staff on the intranet.

5. *What are the furlough and leave provisions available for staff who are COVID 19 positive or close contacts?*

If staff are turned away from work at the screening desk, 3 days COVID-19 leave is provided. For close contacts or staff who are required to isolate, COVID-19 leave is available and Calvary is reviewing this policy at present. Staff who are symptomatic or test positive to COVID-19 will need to use personal leave.

6. *Provision of regular breaks for staff in full PPE and suitable areas for this to occur.*

Our General Manager has sent a memo asking managers to be flexible and compassionate in understanding if a staff member requests a brief comfort pause for PPE changeover, re-hydration, or moisturising. This is not being formalised by a policy. Staff should talk to their managers if they need an extra break. The official breaks are as per the current EA. Suitable areas for tea or meal breaks are provided with extra rooms available in each department. Staff are aware of the location of these extra spaces. The staff dining rooms are available with social distancing requirements. The outdoor area has had more seating, suitably spaced for staff to sit also.

Calvary have offered to meet with the ANMF on a regular basis to discuss any concerns brought to the ANMF by members.

The ANMF Tasmanian Branch is 8000 plus members strong! Supporting nurses, midwives, and care workers as the only union in Tasmania employing nurses and care workers to represent

members. This is why our Organisers and Member Support Team are uniquely positioned to understand your experiences, represent you in your workplace, and offer industrial advice that's relevant to you.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact our Member Support Team via email on membersupport@anmftas.org.au. Email is the preferred and fastest way of contacting the team. Alternatively, you can phone (03) 6223 6777.

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
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