

11 January 2024

Dr John Gerrard
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Queensland Health

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Subject: Our letter of 14 November 2023 and COVID infection controls in hospitals

Dear Dr Gerrard

We wrote to your office on 14 November 2023 raising doctors' concerns about rising COVID-19 cases and inadequate infection controls in Queensland Health hospitals at that time. Doctors were particularly concerned about patients becoming unnecessarily infected and dying and the flow-on impacts for hospital staffing, especially in our overwhelmed emergency departments (EDs).

Our office is yet to receive a response to that letter, however, doctors have contacted us to again report their concern that the issues raised were not acted on last year and that the current, ongoing COVID-19 wave is having detrimental impacts on both patients and hospitals, especially EDs.

In addition, they have questioned recent media articles citing statements by yourself that:

...Queensland hospitals continue to take precautions to protect staff and patients, requiring masks in high-risk areas.

Doctors advise that hospitals are not 'requiring' masks and are only 'recommending' staff wear them in high-risk areas. This means masks are being worn neither routinely nor universally by staff and such recommendations have not been implemented in all (but only some) Queensland Health hospitals.

Medical practitioners have reported frustration and despair at seeing patients becoming unnecessarily infected and that they and their colleagues are having to cope with avoidable and prolonged staff absences due to sickness.

We would be grateful for your response to the above and the issues raised in our November letter. If you would like to meet to discuss these issues further, we would also welcome the opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Dr Maria Boulton
President
AMA Queensland

Dr Brett Dale
Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland