



## Preamble

This policy establishes how the management of COVID-19 is undertaken at Garnbirringu Health Services (Bega) Clinic.

## Policy Statement

Bega acknowledges that COVID-19 infection is present in healthcare settings, where clients and staff may be infected while giving or receiving care. Healthcare workers and others, such as receptionists and transport workers, may be infected during the course of their duties or when working or interacting with clients and other people. Potential infection risks to the practice team and our clients need to be reduced.

Bega has implemented this policy and procedure that minimise the risk of healthcare associated infections including COVID-19.

**The IPC guidelines in WA healthcare facilities (COVID-19)**( [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities](#)) outline policies and procedures that have assisted Bega to safely manage infection control during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## Procedure

Below is the Procedure to refer to, for Infection prevention and control for COVID-19:

**ELIMINATION** – Reduce the opportunities for the virus to spread

### Vaccination:

- Mandatory staff vaccination against COVID-19, 2 Primary doses and one Booster is required for all staff. HR holds the vaccination records for all employees at Bega.

### Staff exclusion from workplace if unwell:

- Staff will refrain from coming to work if they are unwell. Contact your Coordinator or Manager and discuss testing for COVID or Respiratory illnesses via PCR or RAT test.
- If a staff member tests positive to COVID-19, they will isolate at their residence for 7 days as per updated WA Health guidelines. As Bega staff work in a high risk setting with vulnerable populations, the guidelines recommend that 7 days isolation is required.
- A negative RAT test will not be required to return to work. Provided acute symptoms have resolved. Acute symptoms include frequent coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose or blocked nose.
- Any staff with acute symptoms after the 7-day isolation period will remain in isolation until acute symptoms have resolved.

### Screening for symptomatic persons:

- Clients will be triaged by the reception staff, who will ask simple respiratory etiquette questions.



- If a client is identifying as symptomatic, they will be asked to leave clinic and wait out the front of clinic.
- The COVID Coordinator will be available via two-way radio, to attend and move the client into the isolation room.
- The COVID Coordinator will test the client for COVID via a RAT test.
- If the result is **Positive**, the client will be offered a COVID care pack and asked to leave the clinic via back door and return home.
- The client will be offered a phone consult with the doctor as an alternative to face to face consult.
- If the result is **negative**, the client will be asked to wear a mask and asked to wait in the courtyard for the Doctor.

#### **Reduce Number of Health care workers in isolation rooms:**

- The COVID Coordinator will be assigned to RAT testing as required. The coordinator will have a two-way radio to always maintain contact.
- In the event that the COVID Coordinator is unable to fulfill this role for any reason, another staff member will be nominated to complete this role at the discretion of Clinic Coordinator/Manager.

**SUBSTITUTION** – Find alternatives ways of providing care that reduces the risk of transmission.

#### **In the event of an overwhelming outbreak in Bega's clinic:**

- Bega's clinic would close to the public due to safety of remaining staff and clients.
- Bega would place appropriate signage at the clinic to state the reason for the closure and posters would also be placed outside of clinic to direct clients to the Kalgoorlie Health Campus for urgent health care.
- Social media to be updated with advice of the closure and frequently updating on the reopening timeline.
- The Clinic Manager is to liaise with the Kalgoorlie Health Campus, to advise of the closure and to advise there may be more clientele coming in to seek treatment.
- An SMS is to be sent to all clients to advise of the closure to clinic and upon reopening.

#### **Physical distance:**

- All seating in clinic will be reduced to accommodate less people in the waiting room.
- Seating will remain 1.5M apart for social distancing.
- Alternative seating outside is to be offered in the courtyard or out the front of clinic.

#### **Working from home:**

- In some special circumstances, a staff member may work from home to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory illness or whilst awaiting PCR test results. This is at Coordinator/Managers discretion.

#### **Telehealth:**

- If a client is acutely unwell or has tested positive for COVID-19, then a phone consult will be used as an alternative to face-to-face consults.



#### COVID care at home services:

- If a client presents or calls clinic stating they have COVID, reception will email or call the COVID Coordinator, with the client's details.
- The COVID Coordinator/Manager will speak to the client and clinically assess the needs of the client and act accordingly.
- A phone consult with a doctor and/or a COVID care pack will be arranged for the client, and red flags for ED presentation will be discussed with client.
- COVID-19 information is given in the care pack as well as information on how to use the provided pulse oximeter.
- The contents of a COVID care pack include:
  - Thermometer
  - Pulse oximeter
  - Hand sanitiser
  - Disinfectant wipes
  - Masks
  - Hydrolyte
  - Paracetamol x 30
  - Ibuprofen x 20
  - Vicks/Euky bear rub

#### Client Transport:

- All clients that call reception for transport to clinic or other appointments, will be asked respiratory etiquette questions by the reception staff member that takes the call.
- If the client states that they have respiratory symptoms, they will be placed on the service recording as a phone consult or asked to find alternative transport to their appointment.
- If the client states they have no respiratory symptoms, they can use Bega transport for their appointments or to come to clinic to see the Doctor.

**ENGINEERING CONTROLS** – Use physical barriers and other forms of hazard reduction.

#### Isolation room:

- The clinic has 1 x dedicated Isolation room with external doors for adequate ventilation.
- The isolation room has an independent air conditioning systems and does not share vents with the rest of the clinic.
- If a client is negative on a RAT test in the room, then a wash down of frequently touched surfaces with Clinell wipes is indicated.
- If a client is positive to RAT test in isolation room, then upon client leaving, the room will need to be completely scrubbed and sanitised with Clinell wipes.
- The external door will be opened and the room will be aired out for 30 minutes.
- A sign is to be placed on the Isolation room door that faces clinic, stating the room is under 30-minute quarantine and do not enter.
- Once 30 minutes are up, return to the room and remove the sign on the door and the room is ready to use again.



**ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS** – Effective and consistent implementation of policies and procedures.

**Mandatory vaccination and restrictions:**

- All Bega staff must be up to date with COVID vaccines to work at Bega.
- COVID vaccine certificates are held on individual Connex staff profiles and also kept by HR.

**Hand Hygiene compliance:**

- All staff are required to complete annual hand hygiene course.
- All hand hygiene certificates will be sent to HR and recorded on staff Connex profile.

**Staff Education:**

- All clinic staff are appropriately trained to respond to COVID-19 in a safe and appropriate manner.
- All clinic staff are educated on the importance of correct PPE usage and handwashing procedures.
- Ongoing training and support is offered to staff if they are unsure of correct procedures.
- The COVID Coordinator and Clinical manager are available to any staff that may have questions, concerns or ideas on improvement.

**Cleaning and disinfection:**

- The COVID Coordinator will clean the clinic waiting area every hour inclusive of door handles, surfaces and chairs with Clinell wipes.
- The bathroom near the isolation rooms will also be cleaned every hour inclusive of door handles, toilet and basin.
- The cleaning sheet will be signed and dated on the cleaning schedule located on the pin board at the entrance to clinic.
- The cleaning sheet for the bathroom will be signed and dated on the cleaning schedule hanging on the wall outside the isolation room.
- If the COVID Coordinator is unable to complete the cleaning, then they will nominate a staff member at their discretion to undertake the cleaning.

**Signs, posters and information sheets:**

- Each clinic room and treatment room have adequate signage above the sink as to correct hand washing procedure and the 5 moments of hand hygiene. These are updated and reviewed regularly by the clinic coordinator/COVID coordinator.
- There are signs in the waiting room to inform clients about mask wearing and correct hand hygiene, social distancing and cough etiquette.
- If a client wishes to receive a hard copy of the infection control material, one can be provided at the request of the client.

**PPE-** Use of correct personal protective equipment.

**Surgical masks for anyone entering a health care facility:**

- At Bega, all clients and visitors are asked to wear a surgical mask upon arrival.
- Correct mask wearing is to be adhered to at all times whilst in the clinical setting.



- Signage is in the waiting area on how to correctly wear a mask.
- All clients and visitors will be asked to wear their mask correctly by any staff member that sees incorrect mask wearing.
- All staff in a clinical setting will wear a surgical mask at a minimum. N95 and P2 respirators are available for all staff if requested.

**Appropriate PPE:**

- All clinic PPE is stored in a central location for all staff to access.
- PPE is located in the Coordinator/Manager offices in appropriately assigned cupboards.
- All staff can access the PPE at any time it is required
- There is a PPE trolley located outside the Isolation room, with all PPE required for RAT testing clients safely.
- A yellow clinical waste bin is located by the door of the isolation room and signs on how to don and doff PPE correctly are on the wall near the door.
- The COVID Coordinator/Clinic Coordinator are responsible for stock control and replenishment of PPE supplies.
- Surgical masks and hand sanitiser are available at the entrance to clinic for all visiting staff, visitors and clients to use upon entering.