



2 March 2022

## System Alert and Response: preparations for red level commenced

With the rapid increase in numbers of locally acquired cases expected to continue, all regions in WA are now preparing for a move to a red (COVID-19 Alert) level (Widespread Transmission) on the [System Alert and Response \(SAR\) framework](#).

It is expected that red level of the SAR will be fully implemented across all regions by 5 pm on Thursday 3 March 2022.

To help Health Service Providers (HSPs) manage the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission, and protect future service delivery, additional measures will be applied including:

- reduced number of Category 2 and 3 elective surgeries at public hospitals (from 14 March) and some larger private hospitals (from 21 March), as per previous Department of Health advice
- increased use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across all areas within healthcare facilities and community-based care. This will include the use of N95 masks for healthcare workers across all clinical areas.
- increased use of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for all patients attending hospital
- extended use of telehealth for outpatient services and deferral of non-urgent face-to-face services where clinically safe
- voluntary RATs 3 times a week (or every 72 hours) for healthcare workers who regularly work with high risk patients. Please refer to the SAR for specified areas.
- healthcare workers who work in higher exposure areas (as per amber SAR) are no longer required to undertake RATs due to the widespread use of N95s, however a transition period of 2 weeks will be in place for those staff who would like to continue for this period.
- restrictions on public hospital visits to approved essential visitors or those with exemptions under [the COVID-19 Public Hospital Visitor Guidelines](#)
- the requirement for all essential visitors, carers, parents and guardians to undertake a RAT on each visit to a high-risk setting, such as transplant, haematology, oncology, renal dialysis units or wards.

The guidance contained in the SAR will continue to help to reduce risks to our patients and staff and help protect future service delivery as we adapt to the impacts of widespread community transmission of COVID-19.

We thank all staff their ongoing efforts managing our COVID-19 response.

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**Chief Health Officer**

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