



CORONAVIRUS

COVID-19

BULLETIN #1

18 MARCH 2020

This communique has been prepared by the Gladstone Region Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Service Ltd t/a Nhulundu Health Service in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. With the situation changing rapidly Nhulundu Health Service are continuing to review and update our response in line with the latest advice from both the Australian and Queensland Governments.

Based on the latest advice regarding COVID-19 preventative measures, we have adjusted our usual business activities so as to minimise infection risks to our clients and employees.

Please be advised of the following measures that are being implemented, effective immediately, at Nhulundu Health Service in relation to the COVID-19;

Primary Health Care – General Practice:

- We are currently NOT accepting any walk in appointments. You must first call our Practice for an appointment on (07) 49790 992. This is to ensure that we can screen each patient prior to their appointment being made. We are then able to determine which access to health care is most appropriate for each individual patient. These include, telephone and telehealth consultations.
- All clients will be screened at the front door prior to entry to the clinic. Temperatures will be taken and screening questions asked before anyone is allowed into the clinic. We are asking clients to limit the people that they bring with them to the clinic, and only the client to present and if they require a carer only one carer. *Nhulundu Health Service has setup an isolation area for anyone who presents with symptoms. Instructions will be communicated to you if you are required to attend the surgery. Our surgery is offering telephone triaging and consultations for those who phone in that may have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Every patient will be telephoned and screened on the day prior to their appointment within the surgery. This is to ensure that anyone that may be in the risk category is attended to appropriately.
- Any patients that have travelled overseas within the last month OR been in contact with someone who has travelled overseas in the last month OR has cold or flu symptoms OR have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, must NOT present to our surgery. Phone triage will be conducted and the best course of care will be determined from that point.
- The latest advice from Queensland Health stipulates that ONLY people that are in the risk category are to be referred by their General Practitioner for COVID-19 swab testing – this is due to a world wide shortage of test kits.
- If you believe you may be at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to your individual health or family conditions, please contact the surgery for further advice on (07) 49790 992.



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Allied Health appointments:

All Allied Health service clinics have been postponed or changed to telehealth services. Clients with appointments booked into any of the Allied Health Clinics will be contacted to advise if the service has been postponed or there is an alternative consultation process.

We will not have any Alcohol and Other Drug Counselling services or Podiatry Clinics until further notice. All other allied health clinics will be notified in due course.

Aged Care – Home Care Packages & Commonwealth Home Support Programme:

Nhulundu Health Service Aged Care program is still operational for Home and Community supports. Social Support Group outings have been cancelled until further notice. Aged Care Clients will be contacted before receiving services each day to advise of service times and to ensure clients are well before visiting. Aged Care Clients are encouraged to phone the office if they require extra assistance or to make changes to their daily services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Program:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Service is still operational. Family Wellbeing staff are calling clients ahead of home visits to check for COVID-19 symptoms. New referrals and face-to-face meetings will also be screened prior to booking appointments.

Employee Wellbeing:

Nhulundu Health Service have instructed all staff experiencing flu-like symptoms to remain at home until they've been assessed by a medical professional; we've also distributed the latest advice from Queensland Health on self-isolation and prevention measures.

All of our frontline Health and Aged Care Professionals will be supported by Nhulundu Health Service should they be required to take time off from work due to COVID-19 illness or if they are experiencing flu-like symptoms. This support will be determined at the discretion of the Clinical Practice Manager.

Please know that the health and wellbeing of our Clients and our Staff is our first priority. Our phone lines will be busier and there may be a wait time to reach our Medical Reception staff. We appreciate your patience and understanding at this time.

Our Practice Plan is being reviewed daily by Management to ensure that it is compliant with the latest recommendations and advice from the Australian and Queensland Governments.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow all advice from the local, state and federal authorities.

Please remember to wash your hands frequently with soap, cover your mouth if you have a cough or sneeze and phone ahead to our surgery if you have flu-like symptoms on (07) 49790 992.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Cooke", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matthew Cooke

Chief Executive Officer

Gladstone Regional Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Service (GRAICCHS)