

NSW Infection Prevention and Control Response and Escalation Framework

Summary The COVID-19 Response and escalation framework in NSW has been revised to include other acute respiratory infections while continuing to provide guidelines for COVID-19 and is a framework that can be effectively used to support NSW Health to respond to both outbreaks and pandemics or infections of state or national significance. The new framework outlines foundational level IPAC and preparedness.

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Corporate Administration - Communications, Governance
Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health and Safety
Population Health - Communicable Diseases, Infection Control

Applies to Public Health Units, Local Health Districts, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Community Health Centres, NSW Ambulance Service, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Public Health System, NSW Ambulance Service

Audience All Chief Executives; Directors of Clinical Governance & Clinical Operations; Infection Control and Operating Theatre Staff; Infection Control and Prevention, TB Services; Infection Control; Sexual Health, Clinical Services, NGO, Aboriginal Health, Allied Health, Nursing, EDs, GPs, NSW Labs; All Staff of NSW Health

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PURPOSE

The NSW IPAC Response and escalation framework (Framework) in NSW has been revised to include other acute respiratory infections while continuing to provide guidelines for COVID-19.

The Framework supports NSW Health to respond to both outbreaks and pandemics or infections of state or national significance. The Framework outlines a foundational level for when the NSW Health system remains prepared for infection risks, with structured infection prevention and control escalation strategies for yellow, amber and red transmission risks.

The NSW Health Secretary will direct the minimum state alert level, and NSW Health organisations must undertake local risk assessments to determine if further infection prevention and control measures are required in their facilities.

This Information Bulletin must be read in conjunction with the [Infection Prevention and Control Manual: COVID-19 and other Acute Respiratory Infections](#).

KEY INFORMATION

Chapter 3 of the [Infection Prevention and Control Manual: COVID-19 and other Acute Respiratory Infections](#) - Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Response and Escalation Framework was developed to provide guidance to NSW Health facilities to manage changing levels of COVID-19 transmission risk. This has transitioned to include other acute respiratory infections and potential communicable diseases of state or national significance.

Situation

The revised Framework adopts a foundational level approach to ensure the application of robust infection prevention and control practices as a minimum on which escalation strategies are added to enhance IPAC. The Framework also provides guiding controls for transmissible infections with a clear response to changing transmission risk and burden to the health care system.

Clinical Recommendations

All state-wide changes to risk level will continue to be informed by consultation closely monitored through health system metrics and guided by the Risk Escalation Review Panel (RERP) with the state alert level being directed by the NSW Health Secretary.

NSW Health organisations:

- May apply local IPAC enhancements based on internal monitoring and risk assessment (refer to the NSW IPAC Response and escalation framework - Principles

for IPAC monitoring and management for local implementation on page 54 of the [*Infection Prevention and Control Manual: COVID-19 and other Acute Respiratory Infections*](#)).

- Are to refer for review any planned escalation or de-escalation to a different risk level to the Risk Escalation Review Panel.

Additional supporting policies and guidelines:

- [Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook](#)
- NSW Health Guideline *Triggers for Escalation Following Detection of Infection Outbreaks or Clusters* ([GL2019_013](#))
- NSW Health Policy Directive *Infection Prevention and Control Policy* ([PD2017_013](#)).