



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disease Guidance on Junior Doctor Rotations

14 July 2020

Purpose

This Guidance Note provides specific advice to Victorian public health sector entities on junior doctor rotations scheduled during the current Stage 3 restrictions (effective from 12:00am, Thursday, 9 July 2020 – August 2020).

For general and up-to-date advice regarding coronavirus (COVID-19), please visit the Department of Health and Human Service's website - www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the *Movement of healthcare workers and health service employees during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic* Fact Sheet.

Scope

This advice applies to the following junior doctor rotations scheduled during the current Stage 3 restrictions:

1. SET trainees – Term 3 rotations commence on 3 August 2020
2. Hospital Medical Officer (HMO) 4 – Term 3 rotations commence 3 August 2020
3. Basic Physician Trainee (BPT) 3 – Term 3 rotations commence 3 August 2020.
4. Advanced Trainees – Term 3 rotations commence on 3 August 2020
5. Medical Interns – Term 4 rotations commence on 10 August 2020

It is understood that further Basic Physician Trainee (BPT) rotations are currently scheduled for 31 August 2020. These rotations will proceed as planned at this stage.

This guidance does not apply to junior doctor rotations within health services (across campuses).

Rotations between health services based in Metropolitan Melbourne (including the Mitchell Shire)

Junior doctor rotations between health services located in metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire, scheduled during the current Stage 3 restrictions should proceed as planned.

As Health services prepare for junior doctor rotations in the coming weeks, health services should take into consideration guidance issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in the *Movement of healthcare workers and health service employees during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic* Fact Sheet.

This guidance recommends that staff rotations should be designed to reduce disruption when moving to a new work area. It also recommends that rotations between clinical areas that engage with vulnerable patient cohorts and other patient groups be minimised. Staff who are working in health services in the 'hotspot' locations should continue to do so and should be vigilant when/ if rotated to other health services/ across health service locations.

To support the safe movement of staff, it is recommended that junior doctor rotations from health services (within metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire) which are currently facing outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID) infections to another metropolitan health service, for the purpose of education and training be minimised. Junior doctors who are based in hospitals which are experiencing outbreaks should be tested prior to rotating to another health service within Melbourne. These tests should be undertaken 3 days prior to the commencement of the rotation.

Rotations Between Metropolitan and Regional/rural health services

Junior doctor rotations between metropolitan and regional/rural health services should also proceed as planned.

To minimise risk of transmission, all junior doctors who are scheduled to rotate to a rural or regional location (or any location that is currently not subject to the Stage 3 restrictions) are required to undergo a COVID-19 test.

Rotations of junior doctors to rural and regional locations can continue upon confirmation of a negative result.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) test should be undertaken as close as possible to the departure of the junior doctor for the rural/regional rotation. It is recommended that tests be undertaken at least 3 days prior to departure to allow for adequate time to receive the (priority) result.

Rotations between Regional and Rural Health Services

Some regional health services also rotate junior doctors to other regional and rural locations. These rotations can proceed as planned. Health services and junior doctors rotating between health services who are not subject to the current Stage 3 restrictions are requested to take into consideration guidance issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in the *Movement of healthcare workers and health service employees during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic Fact Sheet*.

Junior doctors rotating between sites which are not subject to Stage 3 restrictions are required to adhere to the staff testing and pandemic plan arrangements in place within their health service. They are not required to undertake additional coronavirus (COVID-19) testing prior to commencing a rotation.

Rotations from Rural/Regional locations to Metropolitan Melbourne

A number of junior doctors will be returning to Melbourne following their rural/regional rotations. There are also planned rotations between regional health services to metropolitan health services. Junior doctors returning to a Health Service within a Stage 3 restriction zone are required to follow the recent public health advice.

Regional hospitals are requested to review rotations of their staff to metropolitan hospitals (especially where the staff member will be required to commute on a regular basis). The impacted health services should have plans in place to minimise risk to the staff member and the community.

Travelling between metropolitan Melbourne and rural/regional Victoria during a rotation

It is strongly recommended that junior doctors minimise commuting from their regional and rural placements to metropolitan Melbourne during the Stage 3 restrictions. Junior doctors are requested to be aware of the risk of community transmission in metropolitan Melbourne and adhere to the public health advice.

Victorians outside the metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire are being asked to use common sense when it comes to visiting friends and family, especially those who are more vulnerable. That means seeing only those you need to – if you need to.

Junior doctors on rotation to regional and rural health services are provided with accommodation during their rotation and the department requests that all travel to Melbourne be reconsidered during the current restrictions. Junior doctors are reminded that as per current public health advice, if they return to Melbourne and the Mitchell shire, they will be subject to the stay at home restrictions:

There are only four reasons that you can leave home:

1. Shopping for food or other essential items
2. To provide care giving, for compassionate reasons or to seek medical treatment
3. For exercise (outdoor exercise only, with only one other person or members of your household)
4. Work or study, if you cannot work or study from home

If travel is absolutely necessary, junior doctors must follow public health guidelines to minimise risk to rural and regional communities. Rural and regional health services may be required to provide documentation confirming that the junior doctors' travel is for work purposes to facilitate entry/exit from the areas in stage 3 restrictions.

Next Steps

As Victoria's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic evolves, this advice may change to reflect the current public health advice.

The latest public health advice regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) can be accessed from the Department of Health and Human Service's website - www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.

To receive this publication in an accessible format, email covid-19projectmanagementoffice@dhhs.vic.gov.au

For more information about COVID-19, call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

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