

## Mid/Far North Office

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## Whangarei Office

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## COVID-19

### Second update to Staff – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Update on the situation since our communication on Monday afternoon. Things are looking up – all close contacts from our Northland community case have been tested and are negative. And she is now considered 'recovered'. Please though, still remember to follow strict hygiene protocols, coughing etiquette etc. We should all be vigilantly using the COVID-19 Tracer App if possible and ensure it is Bluetooth enabled.

There were two new additions yesterday (now 31) to the location and time list that we sent you – if you were at those places at those times you need to isolate and get a test. Phone us. We only had one Support Worker in the same location at the relevant time, and she has tested negative. Whew, thank goodness!. Another two Support Workers isolated while waiting for test results after having contact with someone who had been at one of the locations – both tested negative and are back at work now.

#### Additional locations:

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January

Carpet Court Whangarei – 10am to 11.20am

Farmers Whangarei – 11.10am to 12.15pm

So far its great news that we haven't heard from any Clients who have needed to isolate or be tested.

Dr Nick Chamberlain, the CEO of our Northland District Health Board, sent us an email update yesterday – and some of it will be relevant and interesting to you I'm sure. Here it is –

*I would like to counter some of the messages that came out of yesterday, and I thought I'd bullet point them for you:*

- *Our patient has been awesome and used her Covid-19 Tracer App religiously. I'm sure it's made most of us reflect on whether we would have done as well.*
- *Our public have been awesome and responded appropriately. You know how I hate using the word unprecedented, but I'll do it one last time.*
- *Demand has been unprecedented. We are trying to get the data on the number of people who received a push notification because they had been at one of the businesses at the time, but clearly because of the fairly haphazard use of the App, that will only be some fraction of the overall numbers and demand for testing. Never before has the App been so comprehensively tested and because we have these more infectious variants (albeit the South African strain is less infectious than the UK strain), a new category of contacts called casual plus are being tested. This hasn't been the case during our two previous lockdowns.*
- *Obviously only patients who meet those criteria and are casual plus contacts, or have symptoms should be presenting for testing.*

- *Each of our Community Based Testing Centres in Whangarei have 11 clinical staff, administration staff and 4 runners, not the 1-2 staff that were suggested in the media yesterday.*
- *We tested 1776 people across Northland yesterday which represents just on 1 percent of Northland's population. As a percentage this is higher than Auckland on their busiest day during the Auckland lockdown, and on that day there were massive queues and multiple other challenges. No DHB has done more tests than us on a single day as a percentage of the population. We also had challenges but everyone worked very efficiently, so again, a huge thank you to our teams who worked a 14-hour day yesterday and didn't finish until 9.00pm.*
- *15 of 16 of the close contacts have tested negative and there are no other positive cases.*
- *We are getting another six staff from Counties Manukau DHB to help, but Auckland have also been very busy with testing.*

*We have had many many offers of help and I particularly want to acknowledge Police who are helping with traffic management and communication to people waiting in the queues.*

*Whangarei District Council staff have been assisting today in providing water. Also, some of our hapu/iwi who have also been distributing water and fruit today.*

*We've also met with our Iwi Chairs this afternoon to provided them with as much information as possible, as they have many vulnerable communities that are likely to be concerned.*

*I want to emphasise that if you have questions, please ask or seek answers. Healthline have relatively short (5-15min) waiting times again now, and there is a lot of information on both the COVID-19 and the Northland DHB website [www.northlanddhb.org.nz](http://www.northlanddhb.org.nz).*

*It's strange isn't it how we all start to get complacent and take for granted how fortunate we are and the freedoms that affords us until the next threat. Then we cycle through a period of fear, often over-reaction, and then gradually reducing anxiety until the next time. We all know we have to keep expecting these blips and that if we remain compliant with all instructions and do the right thing (scanning, washing hands, getting tested if unwell etc.) we will hopefully succeed in avoiding or again eliminating community transmission.*

*I know how much tougher it is being on the front line, but I want to thank all of you for your work, and I have every confidence that with the help of the public and all of you, we will get through this together. Right, I'm off to visit some of the testing centres, and hopefully not get in the way. Kia Kaha.*

Message from Sam – she says please don't respond to this email because we don't monitor it. Contact [officewhg@homesupport.co.nz](mailto:officewhg@homesupport.co.nz) or call 0800 832 383 if you want to talk.

Message from the Co-ordinator Supports – please please please let us know if you have any extra time available in the next week or two so we can make sure everyone gets the support that they need. Thank you in advance.

### Message about Public Holidays

If you only do Household Management for your Client/s on the Public Holiday, please let us know if you are able to discuss with your Client/s and re-schedule your Household Management shift (not PC - HM only) that would normally be done on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb or Monday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb to another day.

We usually try to minimise the number of people working on a Public Holiday, but right now we are pretty flat out just trying to fill shifts so request that you just work as normal on the coming two Mondays, if you are able. If you do work on the Public Holiday, please do all of your shifts – both Personal Care and

Household Management. (But, as said, if you only do Household Management on the Public Holiday we'd appreciate you talking to your Client/s and doing the shift on another day. And please let us know of any changes.)

#### Message about being short of Support Workers

While we are so short of staff our first priority is to make sure the Clients who need Personal Care get their shifts filled. Household Management shifts are the second priority, and some Clients may miss out if we can't find someone available.

#### Message about PPE

As always, PPE is available and recommended for your use. Guidelines on our website. Please wear gloves and booties as normal. If you need further supplies (masks, hand sanitiser, gowns, aprons) give the office a call (0800 832 383) and we can sort you out with an appropriate allocation.

#### Latest about testing

Testing numbers in Northland remain high – yesterday 983 tests were taken around the region.

Testing staff in Northland say that yesterday's rush on community testing centres had eased by early afternoon.

A reminder that if you were not at a location of interest at the stated times and you have no symptoms you do not need to be tested.

If you were at the locations of interest at the times stated, you need to get a test, and remain isolated until you receive the result.

If you have symptoms but have not been to a location of interest stay home and call Healthline for advice. Testing centres around Northland remain open and free today for people who need a test. Nine community based testing centres remain open, while another is available for testing on request. Testing centres are listed on the NDHB's website.

Leanne and the management team.