Facilitating discharge

- If a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is being discharged prior to de-isolation, the treating medical officer (MO) must inform the Local Public Health Unit (LPHU). The Western Public Health Unit can be contacted via email WPHU@wh.org.au. Following discharge home the patient must maintain home isolation until cleared from quarantine by the LPHU. The LPHU will also provide advice regarding the need for any additional COVID-19 testing. De-isolated patients can return home without isolation.
- If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is being discharged while still infectious the ward should also,
    - Refer the patient to Cohealth at CovidCareTL@cohealth.com.au and cc in WPHU. Within the referral note whether the patient will receive HITH services on discharge
    - Clarify whether there are other positive cases at the discharge location (e.g. patient's home). If there are no other positive cases, ensure the patient understands that by moving to this discharge location increases the risk for co residents, particularly if they are vulnerable. Patients should be encouraged to explore options for isolation that do not place others at risk. Alternative accommodation options can be discussed, such as hotel quarantine. Hotel quarantine can be accessed via referral to IIAT IIATS@justice.vic.gov.au.
- In the context the patient presents with a complex situation requiring public health advice, the WPHU medical lead can be contacted by emailing WPHU@wh.org.au
- For all suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases the MO must complete the EMR form: "COVID-19 Discharge form (For WHO Reporting)", in addition to the standard discharge summary
- Please ensure all the relevant paperwork is given to the patient, including relevant COVID-19 DH information sheets
    - Information for close contacts/ suspected COVID-19 case https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/what-do-if-you-are-close-contact
    - Information for COVID positive cases https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/what-to-do-if-you-have-covid-19

Transporting patients within Western Health

Refer to the QRG on 'Transporting of patient and handling of patient belongings' on Western Health Coronavirus Site for information relating to transporting patients within Western Health.

Transporting the COVID-19 suspected or confirmed patient from hospital to home

Transport via family/ friend

Where patients are transported home with a family member/ friend, the driver and patient should be provided with a surgical mask to wear. If possible, the patient should sit in the back seat diagonal from the driver with vehicle air-conditioning set to fresh air to optimise ventilation

Transport of COVID-19 positive ambulant patients

The National Patient Transport (NPT) IMAX service is available to transfer COVID-19 positive patients to and from Western Health Emergency Departments and COVID-19 wards. NPT IMAX are able to transfer up to 2 COVID-19 positive patients at any one time. This service is available from 8:00AM – 04:00AM Monday to Sunday. On request NPT crew are permitted to access Western Health PPE supply.

Patient eligibility criteria

To be eligible for NPT IMAX transport patients:

- Must be able to self-transfer in and out of a vehicle
- Must not require any physical or medical assistance or monitoring
- Must not have any other relevant comorbidities or infectious diseases
- Are compliant in following instructions
- Have no history of aggression (verbal or physical)
- Are compliant with wearing PPE
- Patients are only permitted to carry one small carry on size luggage and/ or personal item with them. It is the patient's responsibility to handle their luggage on and off the vehicle
- Must wear a surgical mask and face shield for the duration of the trip. PPE is to be provided by Western Health.

Pick up and drop off locations

Patients must be transferred by Western Health staff to the pickup point. NPT will remain outside of the hospital whilst waiting for the patient.

Sunshine

- JKWC Ambulance Bay
- ED Ambulance Bay

Footscray

- Outpatients entrance
- ED Ambulance Bay

Bookings

Booking can be made via NPT's RealTime online booking system, noting COVID +'ve for IMAX bus in the booking details. Requested pick up times should be between 08:00AM – 03:00AM (noting that operational hours are only until 04:00).

Transport of SCOVID and all other COVID-19 positive patients

- Low acuity ambulant patients who have no other means of transport, and are not eligible for NPT IMAX transport may be transported by the Emergency Management Unit (EMU) who are contactable on 1300 565 115
- All other patients can be transported through the normal patient transport options; bookings are via http://inside.wh.org.au/departmentsandservices/HealthSupportServices/Pages/Non-Emergency-Patient-Transport.aspx.

Transporting the COVID-19 suspected or confirmed patient from home to hospital

- Low acuity ambulant patients who are isolating at home can access Ambulance Victoria transport to get to/ from medical appointments. To arrange this please contact the Emergency Management Unit (EMU) on 1300 565 115.

COVID-19 positive patients presenting a risk to the community

If a COVID-19 positive patient presents a risk to the community, consideration should be given to early referral to the State Emergency Management Centre (SEMC) DHHS, semc@health.vic.gov.au so a comprehensive assessment can be completed. Following liaison with the patient, The ACE Care Coordinator will make the referral to SEMC in consultation with the medical and multidisciplinary team. In the event it is determined that a patient is at imminent risk of homelessness or has a particular circumstance that makes isolation at home unachievable a referral to hotel quarantine may be completed by the SEMC team.

Missing patient and discharge against medical advice

- Patients suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 who are missing or wish to discharge against medical advice pose a potential risk to themselves and the community. The treating medical team should follow the guidance in the Clinical Guidelines, which applies to all inpatients aged 16 years or older
- If a patient is missing, ward staff should inform the Nurse in Charge (NIC) and search the immediate area. If not found the NIC will then notify security, operations manager/Divisional Director (out of hours After Hours Administrator (AHA)) and family/power of attorney/guardian) and where necessary patient welfare check. If the patient does not meet the criteria for community-based clearance for COVID-19 this should also be escalated to the LPHU at WPHU@wh.org.au.

- If COVID-19 positive patients present a risk to the community referral should be made to the State Emergency Management Centre (SEMC) DHHS, semc@health.vic.gov.au so a comprehensive assessment can be completed. In the event it is determined that a patient is at imminent risk of homelessness or has a particular circumstance that makes isolation at home unachievable a referral to hotel quarantine can be completed by the SEMC team.