

First regional COVID clinic established at Bunbury Health Campus

Wednesday, 18 March 2020

The first regional COVID clinic will open at Bunbury Health Campus to help protect the South-West region

The clinic will support people who have symptoms and have recently travelled or have had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case

Clinic staff will test for COVID-19, provide information and refer people for appropriate treatment, if required

The first regional COVID clinic will open at Bunbury Health Campus tomorrow (March 19) to test and support people at risk of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

The clinic will operate from 10am-4pm, seven days a week and will be operated by clinicians and support staff who will follow strict infection prevention controls.

Located within an existing building at the health facility, the clinic has been established to provide support to those in the South-West who meet the clinical criteria and require testing.

COVID-19 testing at clinics in Western Australia is only available to individuals who have a fever or acute respiratory infection with proven international travel in the 14 days before the onset of illness or proven close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case in the 14 days before the onset of illness.

If people do not meet the criteria they will not be tested.

Those individuals who are tested and well enough will be asked to self-isolate to await test results, which are generally available within 48 hours. Those who return a negative test will be informed via SMS.

Currently, people residing in country WA who meet the testing criteria are able to present to one of the WA Country Health Service's 100 hospitals and health services to be tested for suspected COVID-19. They can also be tested at clinics operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Aboriginal Medical Service or Silver Chain. They are not required to travel to the metropolitan area for testing.

To date, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the regions.

The community is reminded that the clinics are not meant to replace the medical care available through their GP or the emergency medical care at hospital emergency departments.

If you are attending your GP or hospital, make sure you call ahead and alert your GP surgery or hospital to your symptoms, travel history and of any recent close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Anyone who experiences symptoms outside of clinic hours should continue to use the emergency department at their local hospital or call 000 if they are very unwell.

People are also reminded to take precautions such as covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often with soap or sanitiser, and to stay home from work or school if they are unwell.

Members of the public can telephone the COVID-19 Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 for advice and find more information, including specific clinic locations, by visiting <http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au>

Comments attributed to Health Minister Roger Cook:

"Across rural and regional Western Australia, the WA Country Health Service is seeing a moderate increase in demand that their highly skilled clinical workforce is managing well.

"Of all the regions, we know the South-West is the most densely populated with more than 170,000 residents so it comes as no surprise that demand there is higher.

"So far, over 300 residents in the region have been tested - and cleared - for suspected COVID-19.

"The COVID clinic at Bunbury Health Campus will provide an important pathway for people in the area who meet the criteria to be tested.

"For most people the symptoms of the disease will be mild and will be able to be managed at home but we need to make sure we have measures in place for appropriate diagnosis and advice."

Comments attributed to Bunbury MLA Don Punch:

"I am pleased to hear that the COVID clinic is opening in Bunbury tomorrow.

"Many people living in Bunbury and the surrounding region have expressed their concerns to me about the need for a clinic here in the South-West to help people access testing."

Minister's office - 6552 6500