



Enquiries to: State Health Emergency
Coordination Centre
Telephone: (07) 3708 5239
File Ref: C-ECTF-20/4257

Queensland Health

Ms Nicole Millis
Chief Executive Officer
Rare Voices Australia
PO Box 138
MENTONE VIC 3194

Email: nicole.mills@rarevoices.com.au

Dear Ms Millis

Thank you for your letter dated 23 March 2020, regarding prioritising COVID-19 testing for people living with a rare disease who are displaying symptoms. I understand that you have also written to the Honourable Steven Miles MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. The Minister has asked that I respond directly to you on this occasion.

I very much appreciate you taking the time to share concerns from members of the rare disease community regarding their increased vulnerability due to chronic health conditions and/or compromised immune systems and COVID-19 testing delays and turnaround times.

I apologise for the time it has taken for our response. As I am sure you can appreciate this is a fast-paced situation and Queensland Health is actively managing the frontline actions required to prepare and protect the community from COVID-19.

Across Queensland, testing for COVID-19 may be conducted for people who have fever or history of fever or acute respiratory symptoms such as a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath. If any of your members are unwell and meet the above criteria, they should contact a doctor immediately for a decision on whether they need to be tested for COVID-19.

I am advised that turnaround times for coronavirus testing are approximately two days. While awaiting test results people are advised to self-isolate while they are unwell or to self-quarantine if advised to do so by a health professional.

If your members are advised to quarantine at home by a medical professional, Queensland Health or through government direction and have no other means of getting food or essential items, they can contact the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349.

Adhering to physical distancing, hand washing hygiene and home confinement will be especially important for anyone who believes they are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19. All Queenslanders should stay home unless leaving for essential reasons including:

- shopping for essentials - food and necessary supplies;
- medical or health care needs, including compassionate requirements;
- exercise in compliance with the public gathering requirements;
- work and study if you can't work or learn remotely.

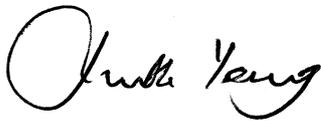
Given the rapidly evolving nature of this situation, you can stay up-to-date with the latest information and advice via the Queensland Government website <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>.

The *Home Confinement, Movement and Gathering Direction (No. 2)* provides additional information on recreational activities, number of allowed visitors and outdoor gatherings. at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/home-confinement-movement-gathering-direction>.

People with disability who need help because of coronavirus (COVID-19) can contact the Disability Information Helpline for information and referrals. The Helpline can assist families, carers, support workers and services and is free, private and fact-checked. Your members can contact the Helpline by phone on 1800 643 787, through the National Relay Service on 133 677 or by Live Chat. Further information is available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/information-and-referrals-for-people-with-disability-and-their-supporters-about-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention. I trust the above information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeannette Young', written in a cursive style.

Dr Jeannette Young PSM
Queensland Chief Health Officer
Deputy Director-General
05 / 05 / 2020