

MEDIA RELEASE

21 December 2021

Thank you for helping us to stay safe

Attribution Lexie O'Shae, Chief Executive, Nelson Marlborough Health:

“While the community has been doing their bit to protect the health system, we have been doing what we can to protect those who need our care.

We are very aware that over the coming months we will learn to live with COVID-19 in our community, which means we will need to support both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients in the hospital.

We had already begun extensive airflow and environmental changes at Nelson Hospital when the first cases returned to Nelson Tasman in November.

The changes to airflow are critical to ensure contaminated air moves away from communal areas and remains in COVID-19 red zones or red patient rooms where it can be extracted safely.

Additional extraction fans have been installed to give more extraction capability across the system and UVC lighting and high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filtration units have been placed in key patient areas.

The last month has also seen a flurry of changes to department locations as areas have shifted to allow for an additional six respiratory isolation rooms in the Emergency Department.

The rooms will be positioned in the space vacated by the Orthopaedic Outpatient department who are now housed on Level 2 of the hospital, where Paediatric Outpatients used to be.

Paediatric Outpatients has temporarily shifted to the Braemar campus across the road from the hospital and closer to the Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (ICAMS) and the Child Development service.

The facilities work continues as we approach Christmas with the most recent development seeing the separation of a red and green stream in the Intensive Care Unit. This will allow patients with COVID-19 to be separated from those patients requiring intensive care as part of their treatment or intervention. This is particularly important for our ability to continue with planned surgical care during outbreaks in the community.

It has really been a team effort when it has come to responding to COVID-19. No area in health has gone untouched and I am immensely proud of the way the Nelson Marlborough Health team has responded.

We have clearly been inspired by the dedication and commitment shown by our community in reaching 90 percent double vaccinated. Thank you for helping us to stay safe and allowing us to keep you safe this summer.

Enjoy your break and if you think you might have COVID-19 symptoms, don't delay, get tested today.

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