



MEDIA RELEASE
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MORE FIT-TESTING NEEDED TO PROTECT DOCTORS AND THE COMMUNITY

A survey by the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland (ASMOFQ) and Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland has shown doctors may be at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Almost half of the 365 doctors who responded said they regularly treated patients who might be infected with COVID-19. However, 70 per cent said they had not been fit-tested for the P2/N95 face masks that are used when treating COVID patients.

ASMOFQ Vice President Dr Hau Tan said fit-testing was essential to ensure frontline doctors were adequately protected from COVID-19.

“Without proper fit-testing, doctors may be exposed to COVID-19, and potentially contract and spread the virus to vulnerable patients, other healthcare workers and the community.”

Dr Tan said a range of P2/N95 masks were available but fit-testing must be conducted to ensure healthcare workers have the right one for their face shape.

ASMOFQ and AMA Queensland have met with the Queensland Government on multiple occasions in 2020, raising numerous concerns on behalf of doctors regarding PPE and the importance of fit-testing.

“Queensland Health has an obligation under workplace health and safety legislation to provide a safe working environment for its doctors and other healthcare workers, and this survey shows that more needs to be done,” added Dr Tan.

The survey also indicated 43 per cent of respondents had not yet received their first COVID-19 vaccination.

AMA Queensland President Professor Chris Perry acknowledged that the vaccination program will take time to roll out but called on Queensland Health to hasten the immunisation of doctors and healthcare workers in hospitals.

“The survey results are a real concern for medical staff and their patients, many of whom move around the health system, between public and private hospitals, and in our community,” Prof. Perry said.

“At the bare minimum, any healthcare worker treating COVID positive patients must have appropriate, fit-tested PPE and their COVID vaccination.”

Prof. Perry also called on Queensland Health to reveal the findings of an investigation into how a Brisbane doctor contracted COVID-19 from a patient at the Princess Alexandra Hospital more than two weeks ago.

“Their investigation must happen quickly so any gaps in the system can be fixed immediately and we stop the spread of COVID-19,” he said.

ASMOFQ and AMA Queensland are committed to collaborating on solutions and finding ways to ensure the health and safety of doctors and the community.

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