



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP  
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services  
Leader of the House

1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000  
GPO Box 48 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3035 6100

Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliament  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie <sup>Neil</sup>

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 3655-21, tabled in Parliament on 30 November 2021, in relation to restrictions for unvaccinated visitors to the Queensland Children's Hospital and Ronald McDonald House.

Throughout the pandemic, Queensland's public health response has considered and managed the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable cohorts. Protective measures such as visitor restrictions and vaccine mandates have played a critical role in protecting vulnerable Queenslanders and the workforce dedicated to caring for them.

At all times, Children's Health Queensland has ensured that children and young people accessing care at the Queensland Children's Hospital or any of its community and mental health services continue to have the support of a parent, carer or guardian in a COVID-safe way.

Queensland's border restrictions have eased, and COVID-19 will inevitably circulate in our community. To ensure we don't overwhelm our hospital system when we have outbreaks, some restrictions on unvaccinated people are necessary.

From 17 December 2021, visitor restrictions have applied to unvaccinated people in vulnerable facilities, including hospitals and healthcare facilities. In recognition that children and young people generally present to hospital and other healthcare services with a parent, carer or guardian, these restrictions do not apply to patients, vaccinated parents, carers, or guardians or families accessing emergency or end-of-life care for a child or young person.

To remove any doubt, **no child or young person or their parent, carer or guardian will be denied access to care or treatment based solely on their vaccination status.**

Some additional restrictions will be necessary for unvaccinated parents, carers and guardians accompanying a child or young person to healthcare facilities. These include:

- Only one unvaccinated parent, carer or guardian can accompany a child or young person to an appointment or admission.
- An accompanying unvaccinated parent, carer or guardian must wear a single-use surgical face mask and will be required to limit their movements to areas where they can safely physically distance from others.
- The unvaccinated accompanying parent, carer or guardian must have a COVID-19 test within 24 hours of entering the hospital for all admissions.

There may be situations that require special consideration which will be managed on a case-by-case basis as required. This includes an exemption request for a second parent, carer or guardian to attend an appointment or admission. There are no restrictions for unvaccinated siblings and other visitors under 16 years of age.

The safety of patients, families and staff is a priority, and ongoing infection control measures will ensure safe, timely and consistent access to healthcare for children and young people throughout the next stage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has always been the case that privately owned health facilities, businesses or organisations may impose restrictions that go beyond what is required under the Queensland Public Health Directions.

From 1 January 2022, Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) has introduced a nation-wide restriction on unvaccinated parents, carers, visitors and workers from accessing any of its Ronald McDonald Houses across the country.

RMHC advise this position was taken after significant consideration and to prioritise the health and safety of the families accessing their vital services, as well as their volunteers and staff.

Children's Health Queensland has been working closely with RMHC to ensure Queensland families have ready access to COVID-19 vaccinations on arrival if needed. Children's Health Queensland will ensure that alternative accommodation options are available to families that do not meet this RMHC vaccination requirement.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



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