Colleagues

As we are all aware, the current outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus) is continually evolving and the WHO has declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Metro South Health's commitment to providing our community with quality care continues to be our top priority as we respond to COVID-19.

With this in mind, we would like to encourage you to consider the potential implications of COVID-19 for your clinical research, especially clinical trials or research embedded within clinical service delivery. In particular, it may be pertinent to consider such potential impacts upon your research, research participants, researchers and consumables such as:

- Patients and families are unable to attend clinical research visits due to COVID-19 illness and/or quarantine.
- Clinical research staff are unavailable to perform research assessments due to COVID-19 illness and/or quarantine.
- Clinical research support staff are unavailable to enrol or monitor patients on clinical trials due to COVID-19 illness and/or quarantine.
- Clinical staff in research positions are recalled to perform clinical service duties in the event of significant staff shortages due to COVID-19 illness and/or quarantine.
- Stocks of trial medications and consumables, in the event that supply chains are disrupted by COVID-19.

While this is not an exhaustive list of potential considerations, we aim to promote early consideration of the potential impact of COVID-19 on research activities. We are sure many of you have already thought about contingency plans that may need to be put in place in the event of reduced capacity to deliver clinical research projects or trials safely due to COVID-19. Any contingency plans will need to be considered in the context of your particular research project, team and required resources and should be developed in consultation with the relevant service/department associated with your research. Principal investigators may wish to consider start dates for approved research, in the context of the potential COVID-19 impacts on clinical support of their research. At all times, considerations for patient safety are to remain of utmost importance.

Metro South Research office is here to support researchers through this process.

- The attached letter template to clinical trial sponsors has been drafted to assist principal investigators of sponsored clinical trials, who may wish to inform and reassure trial sponsors. Principal investigators may add information pertinent to their specific trials and send to trial sponsors.
- Communication with Metro South HREC, Governance and Grants Administration teams is encouraged, should you need to consider research amendments, or require assistance or advice regarding research approvals and Research Support Scheme grants.
- Where NHMRC-funded researchers experience changes in circumstances due to the impact of COVID-19, the NHMRC has recommended consultation with the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officers (RAOs) as the first point of contact. For more information visit the NHMRC Coronavirus research and Vary your grant pages.

Our colleagues at Children's Health Queensland and Metro North have recently provided similar advice to their researchers and we acknowledge their contributions, and those of Western Sydney Health in the development of these messages. Thanks for your commitment to clinical research and patient safety at Metro South Health.

Regards

J Upham

20200316 MSH
Clinical Trial Sponso

Professor John Upham
Chair | Metro South Research
Metro South Health