

The **clinician's role** in public health and communicable disease control

Clinicians play a pivotal role in the public health response to communicable disease.

The aim of communicable disease control is to prevent onward transmission of infection from the patient (the 'case') to others. The public health strategy employed depends on aspects of the infection such as speed and mode of transmission, severity of illness, and opportunities available to prevent onward transmission.

Clinicians are integral to the public health response by undertaking the following actions:



Notifying the health department/local public health unit (LPHU) that your patient is suspected or confirmed to have a notifiable condition ([Notifiable infectious diseases, conditions and micro-organisms | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/notifiable-infectious-diseases-conditions-and-micro-organisms)). This allows the LPHU to initiate the public health response.

- For **urgent notifiable conditions**, there is usually a time-crucial element to the public health response, and notification should be immediately by telephone on suspicion.
- For **routine notifiable conditions**, notification should be via the electronic form (see link above) within 5 business days of diagnosis.



Providing information about your patient/case (via the notification process) such as their contact details, clinical presentation, and relevant medical history which informs the public health response and surveillance activities.



Treating your patient/case and where relevant providing advice on isolation/quarantine and clearance to return to normal activities.



Depending on the infection, assisting with **contact tracing** of the case, to assess for infection, advise to monitor for symptoms, and to **prescribe post-exposure prophylaxis such as vaccination or clearance antibiotics**.

You may be contacted by a Public Health Officer to assist with these actions.

Without the support of clinicians it is impossible to undertake an effective public health response, which requires close collaboration between clinicians, the LPHU, primary care providers, health services, hospitals, the health department and laboratories.

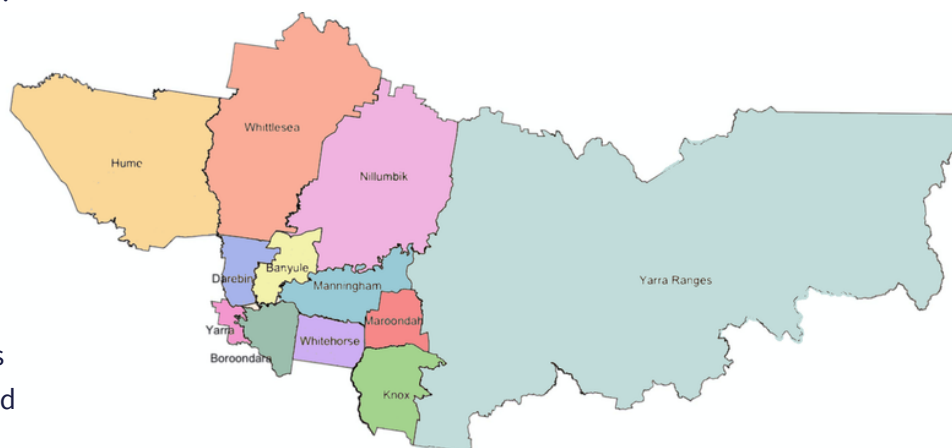
Thank you for your assistance - together, we can help protect the health of our community.

About NEPHU

The **North Eastern Public Health Unit (NEPHU)** works within a network of Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) across Victoria and with the Victorian Department of Health (DH) to deliver public health interventions to the people of twelve local government areas (LGAs) in north and east Melbourne. More information on NEPHU can be found at www.austin.org.au/NEPHU.

NEPHU now has accountability for the public health management of all notifiable conditions except tuberculosis, anaphylaxis and high lead levels. This includes all vaccine-preventable diseases, blood-borne viruses, sexually-transmissible infections, zoonoses, vector-borne diseases and enteric diseases, as well as antimicrobial resistant pathogens.

NEPHU is authorised to receive notifications of notifiable conditions from medical practitioners and laboratories. NEPHU will also undertake case management, manage outbreaks and lead local prevention actions in relation to notifiable conditions in collaboration with clinicians and other stakeholders.



All clinics and hospitals in Victoria have been geographically allocated to a LPHU. Your clinic or hospital is in the NEPHU catchment, which means NEPHU will work with you to co-ordinate public health responses to notifiable conditions, data collection, be available for public health related inquiries, and collaborate with you during outbreak investigations involving your facility.

Key people at NEPHU

- Dr Annaliese van Diemen, Director
- Asmara Jammali-Blasi, Senior Manager Health Protection Operations
- Dr Katherine Ong, Senior Public Health Physician
- Dr Rehana Di Rico, Public Health Physician
- Dr Claire Gordon, Medical Specialist

Contacts

- For Health Protection, Epidemiology and Public Health Medicine enquiries (including disease and outbreak management), email: healthprotection.nephu@austin.org.au
- To report any individual cases or outbreaks of a notifiable infectious disease, condition or micro-organism, see the Victorian Department of Health's [Notifiable infectious diseases, conditions and micro-organisms](#) webpage.
- The notification phone number is **1300 651 160**.



*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to Elders past and present.
We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.*