

2 October 2020

### **Re: Latest Update on COVID-19**

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I am pleased to confirm that there are still currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Warrigal.

The regular updates that have been sent to keep residents and relatives informed on Warrigals' actions to keep your loved ones safe have been provided to all primary contacts. One of the learnings from Newmarch House that we have adopted has been to communicate with all of the family contacts that we have listed, therefore this will be the first time that many of you will have received this communication. Our preference is to have them emailed to you, so if you could please contact your local home or contact 1800 Warrigal and provide us with a current email address that would be appreciated.

With the weather warming up, we have seen more families taking advantage of this and visiting outside rather than in the Safe Visiting Areas. As these visits are still on the premises, the same procedures need to be followed, including the screening tool being completed, face masks should be worn and social distancing observed. It remains a requirement for proof of a flu vaccination to be provided, and if you have not had a vaccination, IOH in Wollongong can administer this, and if you advise that you have been referred by Warrigal the cost will only be \$10.

This week the Quality and Safety Commission visited two of our care homes, at Albion Park Rail and Warilla to undertake comprehensive reviews, which included infection control training and practices. While the full report will not be provided for a number of weeks, the assessment team commented positively at both homes on this area, including the number of staff that have completed the Department's training on PPE; the additional staff that have been employed to facilitate safe visits; and the communication with residents and relatives. We understand that we can always improve, and we will be looking at undertaking another survey in the coming weeks to obtain your feedback.

The Aged Care Royal Commission delivered a special report on the COVID-19 pandemic yesterday. The report called the COVID-19 pandemic the greatest challenge Australia's aged care sector has faced. The report makes six recommendations including a requirement that the Government report back to the Australian Parliament by 1 December 2020, on the progress being made.

The report identifies four areas for immediate action, including the Government funding aged care providers to ensure there is adequate staff available to deal with external visitors to enable a greater number of more meaningful visits. All the recommendations are welcomed by Warrigal, but this one in particular would allow for more visits to be undertaken in a safe environment with additional staff dedicated to facilitate this. Warrigal will be submitting an application for this funding to be provided. It was also recommended that accredited infection prevention and control experts be used in residential aged care, with funding available to support these positions.

While the reduction in community transmissions has been pleasing, we continue to monitor the advice from NSW Health on areas considered a higher risk, learn from the experiences from Victoria and other providers and observe the impact this virus has had across the world. We will continue to be focused on safety as we work towards obtaining the funding to implement the recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission.

I would like to reassure those who may be receiving this update for the first time that Warrigal has a comprehensive Outbreak Management Plan and in recent months we have been working closely with the Local Health Districts regarding the transferring of any positive COVID-19 cases to beds within the Health District. A short video presentation on the establishment of a dedicated Residential Aged Care Collaborative, which features our CEO, Mark Sewell and another aged care leader in the region, as well as the Chief Executive of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District can be viewed [here](#). We have been updating the Advanced Care Directives to ensure that these reflect the wishes of residents/customers in the current environment.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again thank you for your support, which is communicated through our social media and emails sent each week.

You can call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm, if you have any further enquiries. You can also email us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au) with any feedback you might have or for more general advice you may want to contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600. them to contact 1800 Warrigal to update their email addresses.

Yours Sincerely,



**Craig Smith**  
**Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities**