

14 August 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 outbreak in Victoria has now seen one in four aged care homes impacted while three private homes have now been taken over by the Victorian Government. There are now over 2400 residents in aged care homes in Victoria that have tested positive to COVID-19, and the focus this week has been on restricting staff from working in multiple homes. This was identified as a high-risk area by Warrigal when visiting restrictions were first implemented, and while staff can only work in one Warrigal home, we have also increased the hours of many part-time staff who was working at other locations outside of Warrigal, to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The Royal Commission into aged care resumed this week, and the focus has been on the impact of COVID-19 on the aged care industry. There was a lot of discussion on how prepared the sector is for an outbreak, and how the lessons learnt from the previous outbreaks at Dorothy Henderson Lodge and Newmarch House have been adopted. The COVID-19 Working Party continue to meet fortnightly to review our plans and preparedness, and at one of these meetings, we invited the CEO of BaptistCare to share with us their experience and learnings from managing the first major outbreak at Dorothy Henderson Lodge. This provided us with some valuable insights that have been adopted into our outbreak management plans.

The Infection Control reviews of our residential aged care homes by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District continued this week, and all six homes in the Illawarra have now been reviewed. The reviews highlighted the comprehensive screening and entry process at each home, the benefit of having dedicated and trained infection control advocates and good access to equipment cleaning products. While the other Local Health Districts have indicated they will not be undertaking infection control audits, we continue to work closely with them. This will include further messages in the coming weeks, and seeking your feedback on preferences regarding hospital admissions or remaining in the home in the event of an outbreak.

The past week has seen an increase in testing both residents and staff who display any symptoms consistent with COVID-19. We have now tested 138 residents, with 18 of them being tested in the past week. While we are still waiting on the results for 2 residents, all of those tested have been negative and don't have the virus. There have been 280 staff tests undertaken, with 25 of these in the past week as we continue to be vigilant with safety.

There are regular updates provided by NSW Health as hotspots arise, and these are incorporated into our screening tool. If you reside in a current hotspot and are seeking a visit in the Safe Visiting Area or a compassionate visit, please be aware that you will not be allowed to visit your loved one. This was unfortunately the case for all of the families that lived in Wingecarribee Shire.

I am pleased however, that this is no longer considered to be an area of high risk, and visits to the Bundanoon Care Home commenced again from today.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your continued support and understanding during these unprecedented times. 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 with any feedback you might have or alternatively for more general COVID19 advice please contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CS' or similar initials.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities