

27 November 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.

This week the Government released revised guidelines for visiting residential aged care homes, as we move into a COVID Normal phase. These guidelines classify homes into categories based on the current levels of transmission in the community, and as there are no current community transmissions in any of the Local Government Areas where Warrigal has care homes, all of our homes are currently in the lowest category which is classified as Tier 1 (of a 3 Tier classification system with Tier 1 having the least restrictions and Tier 3 having the most). This means that from next week, there will be some changes to visiting protocols including visits being conducted in resident's rooms if this is the preferred option.

The implementation of this system will mean that we will be able to escalate our response to the COVID-19 situation being faced by location, which would be at short notice. We would communicate this with all of the relatives through various communication channels, but it would mean that if the care home was classified as Tier 2, then visits would be restricted similar to existing arrangements, while Tier 3 would mean only visits for residents/customers at end of life would be permitted.

It will still be essential to be screened prior to entering the home, or having an outdoor visit with a resident/customer. While we will be able to accommodate more visits each day, the current processes that are in place at each home for arranging visits need to continue, including the hours and days available for visits and the way that you contact the home to schedule a visit. The visits inside the rooms would still require visitors to wear a face mask when walking through the home, but could be removed in the room with normal social distancing being followed. The number of visitors entering a resident/customer's room is still limited to two at a time. It is important when making arrangements to visit that the type of visit is stipulated, as we are limited in many of the homes with the numbers that could be accommodated outdoors and residents that are being visited for compassionate reasons will be the priority.

This week we held the Zoom meeting for relatives at Mount Terry, where we received some very good feedback regarding the management of the home and some suggestions were made on areas for improvement, which have been followed up. The relatives in attendance felt that regular Zoom meetings would be a good way to strengthen communication and as a result we will continue to schedule these at all homes next year.

The number of outdoor visits across Warrigal continues to increase with the warmer weather, with 367 taking place over the past week. The number of families taking their loved one out for a social outing is also increasing with 67 residents/customers leaving the home for an outing. Many families are enquiring about protocols around Christmas in a COVID Normal environment, particularly if residents/customers attend family gatherings and stay overnight. Each request would need to be risk assessed based on the number of family members attending, where they have come from, whether social distancing can be followed and the location of the gathering. As a general principle, the risk assessment when there are more than ten people attending an indoor gathering will be more involved than smaller numbers, or outdoor functions.

As we now move into the final month of the year, we hope that the current status in the community remains, but please be assured that we will continue to be vigilant with safety, maintain our focus on undertaking risk assessments, supporting staff with Infection Protection Control training while maintaining strong partnerships and attending regular meetings with the Local Health Districts.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your support, understanding and the feedback that you have provided.

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 for more general advice you may want to contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600.

Yours Sincerely,



Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities