

29 May 2020

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

Dear resident representatives and relatives

Thank you once again for your continued support of the actions being taken by Warrigal to protect our residents and customers. As restrictions within the community are relaxed even further with social distancing guidelines being followed, these changes are impacting on the expectations of families wanting to enter the aged care home. We also know that despite the changes being made in the community, there have been outbreaks in 25 homes throughout Australia and that there are still eight active cases in residential aged care homes throughout NSW.

As we head into winter, which is the most challenging season for influenza outbreaks, we need to ensure that our focus remains on protecting your loved ones from this virus by continuing to monitor staff closely for any symptoms or risks of working in the home. To date, 119 staff have now been tested for COVID-19 (which represents 10% of the Warrigal workforce) while a further 19 staff still remain in isolation before they are permitted to return to work. There have been a further 13 residents tested this week, bringing the total tested to 64, and fortunately, there remain no positive COVID-19 results.

The Working Group that was formed to deal with Warrigal's response to COVID-19 continues to meet on a weekly basis to review our preparation and actions that have been implemented. This week, the focus of the meeting was to test our preparedness by having an emergency drill of an outbreak at one of our homes. There were some valuable learnings including having the staff in the neighbourhood or the impacted section of the home, removed immediately, the urgent testing of all residents and the importance of having a comprehensive communication plan for all our staff and the media developed.

This plan included the need to activate the Special Care Unit for confirmed COVID19 cases, and to liaise with residents and relatives about transferring to that special unit where staff would be able to provide a high standard of care in a dedicated unit with appropriate equipment and resources. We will continue to prepare for an outbreak in our homes, which includes having appropriate trained clinical staff and a dedicated team that can be mobilised at short notice in an emergency.

We have been looking at opportunities for residents to go outside the care home, providing safe distancing requirements can still be followed. This week we are planning how to take residents on scenic bus trips, which will be for no more than two hours with the number of residents being determined by the need to socially distance on the bus.



**In addition to this the following actions have also been undertaken since the previous update:**

- The Safe Visiting Areas have now been finalised at Albion Park Rail, Goulburn and Mount Terry. The final two will be completed at Mt Warrigal and Queanbeyan next week, and the feedback that we have received through the care homes and social media has been very encouraging.
- Our volunteers who can no longer enter the homes have been busy making personal protective gowns and masks that can be used for training purposes by staff to prepare for an outbreak.
- Bunnings in Goulburn kindly donated a patio heater for the comfort of some family members having window visits at that location.
- We have produced an information video where my clinical colleague and I are interviewed by the CEO about the virus. We are looking forward to your feedback about how useful it was for you.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your support and understanding. If you have any further enquiries, please call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, now operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm. You can also email us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au) 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 black ink, appearing to be the initials "CS" or a similar stylized name.

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