

5 June 2020

Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I am pleased to start by confirming that with your continued support we still have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in any of our residential care homes. I appreciate and thank you for your understanding of the actions that have been implemented to ensure the safety of our residents. Through the feedback and requests for visits we have received, I know it has been difficult for some of you.

The Industry Code for visiting aged care homes was reviewed on 29 May 2020, to seek feedback from different parties on its' impact. The review showed that there has been an increase in the availability of visits to homes while still ensuring that residents are protected from COVID-19, through procedures such as the Safe Visiting Areas that have been constructed. One of the actions that was agreed to with the review, which has been one of the concerns raised by some of you over the past few weeks, was to develop a set of Questions and Answers to explain some of the provisions in the code in more detail. This should provide some clarity and consistency throughout the industry, with a further review planned to be undertaken in the coming weeks.

The Safe Visiting Areas have now been completed in all of our Care Homes. The demand for the use of the area in our largest home in Goulburn has resulted in a second area being constructed. In addition to most visits taking place in these areas, compassionate visits are still being facilitated where there is a need for the family member to support the care and services being provided. These requests should be made to the Manager of the respective home. In order to comply with the Code, the minimum visit is 30 minutes and the maximum time allowed is two hours.

With restrictions being eased in the community, this has required us to ensure we are focused on being even more vigilant by assessing staff and residents if they display any symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. This week we had a further ten staff and three residents tested, all with negative results.

The Working Group that was formed to deal with Warrigal's response to COVID-19 continues to meet on a weekly basis, and as a result of the tasks that were identified in the previous scenario of having an outbreak at a home, a comprehensive plan has been prepared on the actions that need to be undertaken. It is intended that in the coming weeks we will test the plan by having a "mock" outbreak at one of our homes.

We want to work on identifying more opportunities for improvement, and in the coming week, will conduct a resident survey to seek feedback on a number of areas including the safety measures that have been implemented, the communication with families and the activities being undertaken. One action that has been taken immediately has been the reintroduction of pet therapy programs.

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 or alternatively for more general COVID-19 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 'CS' or similar initials, positioned below the 'Yours Sincerely,' text.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities