

26 February 2021

COVID-19 Vaccination Roll-Out

Dear resident representatives and relatives

The past week has seen the rollout of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine commence in a number of residential care homes in Australia. The Commonwealth has engaged teams from Healthcare Australia and Aspen Medical to come to each home and administer the vaccine, with staff from Warrigal supporting them in establishing a designated area within the home, escorting residents to this area and then monitoring the residents following the vaccination for any adverse reactions.

On Wednesday this week, the residents at Warrigal Stirling in the ACT were the first residents at Warrigal to receive the vaccination. Each resident where consent had been provided were issued with a lanyard with their photo and other important details including allergies that were used by the team from Aspen Medical to identify each person prior to the vaccine being administered. The team from Aspen Medical were provided with enough doses for every resident in the home, and as some residents did not want the vaccine, or consent hadn't been provided, the surplus doses were given to staff, which will continue to occur as each home receives the vaccination.

There have been a number of care homes throughout Australia, including some in Illawarra who were advised that they would have their residents vaccinated this week, which were subsequently postponed at very short notice. As these will need to be rescheduled, we have not yet been notified if any of our homes have been scheduled for next week. While we will be able to accommodate the vaccination teams at short notice, the biggest challenge will be having all of the consents signed on the form provided by the Commonwealth. We will be commencing to contact family members from this weekend, however, if you are visiting your loved one in the coming days and you are the person responsible for decisions, it would be appreciated if you could complete the relevant section of the consent form on page three. Many of you may have already completed this if you have been in the care home this week.

This week NSW Health removed the requirement for staff and visitors to wear face masks whilst in a NSW care home, which was implemented immediately. This has been welcomed by both the staff and residents, however it is still important that we maintain the existing infection control practices of social distancing, hand hygiene, the entry screening tool and QR code being used and of course, while it is no longer mandatory, you can still choose to wear a face mask which will continue to be provided by Warrigal.

The easing of restrictions has seen an increase in the number of visits occurring in the care homes, with 858 visits occurring within the homes last week, while a further 111 left the home for a social outing. With no community transmissions for over a month, we will be looking at increasing the number of bus outings, and having residents getting off the bus to enjoy a drink or some food.

Our focus will continue to be on preparing for the vaccine rollout, and if there is an update on any homes that will be included in next week's schedule, there will be further communication with those residents and relatives.

Thank you for your understanding as we continue to work through this process. I am sure with your support we will be able to respond promptly to the tight timeframes that will be imposed.

Please do not hesitate to contact Warrigal by email at warrigal@warrigal.com.au with any feedback you might have or by calling our information line on Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'CS' or 'SM', written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities