

16 October 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 past week has seen some mystery cases in NSW including one in Bargo, a considerable distance from the identified clusters in Sydney. There has also been a confirmed case in Goulburn which was from a known source in the Sydney cluster which was managed by the SNSLHD. While cases have been reducing in Victoria, the Chief Health Officer in NSW summarised the emotions that we have all been experiencing where our “comfort levels about the current situation go up and down”. I understand that many relatives believe that we should now be opening up the homes for unrestricted visitations, while others have also provided feedback that they feel reassured that the safety of our residents/customers continues to be our focus.

While we have managed to get through winter without any positive cases, the easing of community restrictions and the larger crowds that will be gathering over the next few months makes it even more important that we do not become complacent. It is however recognised that the emotional support of the residents/relatives is just as important. We are looking at a number of options to ensure this is provided, including utilising more volunteers to facilitate in-room visits after they have undertaken infection control training, and if family members would like to spend more time with their loved ones and are prepared to also undertake the training, they should make the local management team aware of their willingness to be involved.

This week we were advised that over the coming weeks NSW Health will be delivering the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission Train the Trainer program in Infection Prevention and Control. This training has been developed for staff within the residential care homes to facilitate and will incorporate workshop scenarios, PPE videos, in-service presentations and a competency assessment. We are pleased that the Local Health Districts (LHDs) will be providing this level of support to complement the training that has already been undertaken.

The Federal Government has also indicated that each aged care home will be required to have a designated member of the nursing staff that will be required to undertake an identified Infection Protection Control Course and take on a broader infection control role within the aged care home.

The Zoom meetings with relatives will be commencing next week and will continue up until Christmas. We will be providing updates and responding to questions, and conducting poll questions so that we can obtain feedback on the safety, wellbeing and happiness of your loved ones, and whether there is value in facilitating more meetings. I am looking forward to meeting many of you through these meetings.

We have had infection control audits through the Quality and Safety Commission and the Local Health Districts (LHDs), and while the Quality and Safety Commission is focused on compliance with the Aged Care Standards, the expertise within the LHDs has been valuable in comprehensive action plans being prepared. We have responded to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District audits, and incorporated the feedback from the Quality and Safety Commission, and they will be returning to all of the homes within their area for a follow-up audit to review the progress that has been made. We are pleased to be working closely with the LHDs and this week we attended meetings with all three of them that cover the Warrigal geographical area.

There have been a number of requests in the past week to take residents/customers home for social outings, and the risk assessments have demonstrated that families understand the importance of following social distancing and wearing face masks, which is important in allowing these visits to continue. We are reviewing the number of residents/customers that leave the home each week for either a social visit or allied health appointment, the number of compassionate visits and the number of bus outings so that we can closely monitor the risks to all residents/customers.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again thank you for your support, which is communicated through our social media and emails sent each week.

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