



27 August 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives

The past week has seen a significant increase in positive case numbers in both NSW and ACT, while vaccination rates have also increased substantially over the past week. There have been a large number of cases in Western NSW this week, while positive cases continue to occur in the Illawarra, Goulburn and Canberra. We continue to closely monitor the number of positive cases, the source of these cases and the dates and times that a venue has been exposed to a positive case.

We communicate these exposure sites to the Managers of homes that are located within close proximity to them, screening tools are updated and staff that may have been to the venue at any time during the date of exposure are required to provide evidence of a negative COVID result prior to returning to work, which also applies to any staff that display any symptoms. Over the past two weeks, we have had 87 staff tested for COVID, all with a negative result. The total number of staff tests undertaken since the beginning of the pandemic is now 1,163, while 407 residents have been tested.

There are now 22 aged care facilities with COVID outbreaks in NSW, and one in ACT. Of the 22 in NSW, 67 residents have tested positive to COVID.

COVID-19 Cases – NSW

The number of positive cases in the past week continues to increase, with a record number of 5,754 cases, which is an increase of 2,022 from the previous week where there were 3,732 cases. The average number of cases is 822 a day.

The number of hospital admissions has increased by 297 over the past week, with 117 now in Intensive Care, with 65 deaths since the current outbreak commenced on 16 June 2021. There have now been over 5.6million vaccine doses administered since 22 February 2021, including 46,645 in the past 24 hours.

COVID-19 Cases – ACT

The number of positive cases in the ACT has increased to 211, with 21 cases in the past 24 hours. The total number of vaccinations in the ACT is 199,281.

ACT Health continues to work with over 3,500 people who have self-identified as close contacts of ACT outbreaks. This is a reduction in around 7,500 who have come out of quarantine in the past 48 hours. There are currently 11 patients in ACT hospitals, including one requiring ventilation.

Visitor Restrictions

There has been no changes to restrictions for visitors in the past week, with the following criteria applicable at all care homes:

- Visit duration is one visit per resident per week.
- Visits are only to provide essential care functions or if the resident is at end of life.
- Only one visitor is permitted at a time, except at end of life.
- All visitors must wear face masks.
- Visits must be in the resident's room.
- No visitor can enter the home if they have been to any venues listed as a place of concern.
- Any person visiting must sign-in using the revised screening tool and use the QR code for contact tracing.

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



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It is not a requirement for visitors to be vaccinated, but it is possible that in the future, visitors that have not been vaccinated may either not be permitted to visit or may need to continue to wear PPE.

Rapid Antigen Testing

Rapid antigen testing is a screening tool to help detect COVID-19 in people without any symptoms, and the testing involves a nasal swab with the results available within 15 to 20 minutes. Rapid antigen tests will detect most cases of COVID-19 but are not as accurate as the standard test.

These tests are being used at aged care homes in the high-risk areas within the Sydney LGA where there are no current outbreaks and Warrigal are considering trialling the testing at two care homes to understand the additional level of safety that it will provide our residents, and if successful it could provide an opportunity to increase visitor arrangements if they agree to testing.

Vaccinations

This week the Public Health Orders were released from NSW Health and ACT Health, that outline the requirements for staff to be vaccinated. Staff (including contractors) working in residential aged care, including health practitioners, must have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination in order to enter the care home after 9am on 17 September.

There will be an exemption if a person is unable to be vaccinated due to a medical contraindication. The worker will be required to provide evidence of a medical contraindication with a certificate from a medical practitioner, in a form approved by the Chief Health Officer that specifies the medical contraindication. The Public Health Orders now provides all staff with the clarification on who needs to be vaccinated, as there were some pregnant staff that were waiting on this information to make a more informed decision.

The vaccination program has been a focus at Warrigal since the Government mandated compulsory vaccinations, which has resulted in a number of on-site clinics being arranged, and a partnership with Company Medical Services to undertake clinics in geographical hubs including Illawarra, Southern Highlands, Queanbeyan and Canberra.

The vaccination rates are reviewed weekly and reported to the Commonwealth. At the beginning of this week, 83% of our staff had either received their first vaccination or have been booked in for their vaccination prior to 17 September. The number of staff who have indicated they will not receive the vaccination has been minimal, and there is a plan to communicate and follow up with all of the outstanding staff in the coming days.

Your feedback is always welcome and is important for us if we are going to establish trust and provide a quality service. There are many ways that you can provide this feedback including contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or by emailing us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'CS' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities