

21 August 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 outbreak in Victoria has seen the number of positive cases begin to decline daily, but unfortunately, the number of deaths in aged care homes continues to rise, with 242 residents in the state dying from COVID-19. In response to the impact on the aged care sector, the Federal Government has developed an Aged Care Preparedness Plan using measures that have been used in up to 100 aged care homes in Victoria. The plan involves using the Australian Defence Force and state health teams to support homes experiencing an outbreak and the use of private hospitals for residents to receive treatment.

Following the audits that were undertaken by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Infection Management and Control Team, this week we participated in a scenario planning exercise with them to assess our preparedness for a COVID-19 outbreak. The exercise was designed to test the effectiveness of our Outbreak Management Plan and was based on a fictional home. The meeting also highlighted the importance of collaborating with the local health district for residents to be transferred to hospital where necessary, and we will be seeking your feedback on whether you prefer your loved one to remain in the care home or be transferred to the hospital if they tested positive to COVID-19.

There have been several enquiries regarding the current arrangements when a resident needs to leave the care home for an essential visit. We understand that many families are seeking to take their loved one out for an outing, however, at this stage, this should be limited to essential appointments such as medical or allied health visits. While face masks should be worn by all parties while driving, there will be occasions where the appointment will require that the face mask be removed. In these instances, it will still be necessary for the resident to be isolated for 7 days when they return to the care home.

While there have been no confirmed cases, we continue to be vigilant with the testing of residents and staff who display any symptoms consistent with COVID-19. We have now tested 147 residents, with 9 of them being tested in the past week. While we are still waiting on the results for 1 resident, all of those tested have been negative and don't have the virus. There have been 296 staff tests undertaken, with 16 of these in the past week.

With Father's Day approaching, we will be looking at how we can still make this day special for families, similar to what was undertaken on Mother's Day. There will be further updates in the coming weeks on the arrangements that will be put in place.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and while I continue to recognise and thank you for your continued support, I am sincere in my gratitude, and understand that this is a very challenging time that would be even more difficult to manage without your support and understanding.

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 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 'CS' or similar initials, positioned above the printed name.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities