

24 July 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 escalated over the past week with a significant impact on aged care homes, with over 400 positive COVID-19 cases in over 60 homes. In NSW, there have been some major clusters that have been linked to Victoria, which has resulted in the number of positive cases increasing over the past week, including some significant hotspots in South Western Sydney. While we continue to be vigilant with safety, these events have delayed our planned approach to ease some existing restrictions from August.

While staff who work in Residential Care Facilities in South Western Sydney local government areas are now required to wear face masks until the end of July, we have increased our supply of these masks and are encouraging all staff to wear them. A number of our care homes have the majority of staff wearing masks as a precautionary measure already, and if the number of cases continue to increase, Warrigal will review the need to make this compulsory for all staff.

We continue to ensure that any resident that shows any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is tested, having now tested 102 residents, with 10 of these being tested in the past week. While we are still waiting on the results for 4 residents, all of those tested have been negative. Since the beginning of the outbreak, we have had 99 new residents move into our care homes who have all been isolated for at least 7 days, and while we understand that this is not an ideal introduction to a new home, the safety of everyone in the home is the priority.

Unfortunately, the number of outbreaks across NSW has meant that we have had to review the decision for residents to leave for social outings. At this point, taking loved ones out of the home to public places or social gatherings is considered to be a higher risk than it was on previous updates and is no longer possible. Any essential visits to medical appointments or allied health professionals would need to be risk assessed. This will continue to be reviewed weekly.

The screening tool that is used to monitor anyone entering a home has been updated on several occasions over the past week to reflect the emerging hotspots. If you reside in one of these areas or have visited one that has been identified as being linked to a COVID-19 positive case, please do not come to visit anyone unless they are being palliated, where you would need to wear full PPE.

This week the trial of the Special Care Unit will be completed, and I was able to spend some

time there with the staff and residents to get an understanding of some of the key learnings and areas that need to be improved if the unit needed to be activated. A full review will be undertaken in the coming weeks, and the staff that worked in the unit will continue to receive training to ensure that their skills remain current.

The Department of Health has issued a document on the actions that need to be taken within the first 24 hours of a positive COVID-19 case. Warrigal had already prepared a response plan, including the activation of a Rapid Response Team, and we have now amalgamated these documents into one that is compliant with the regulatory bodies.

I appreciate that the increased safety measures may be disappointing for some family members and friends, who may have been looking forward to visits outside of the Safe Visiting Areas, but with the increase in community transmissions continuing to rise, we need to remain focused on keeping the virus outside of our homes. I hope that you understand this focus and the need for it to continue.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your continued support and understanding during these unprecedented times. 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 or alternatively for more general COVID19 advice please contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Yours Sincerely,



Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities