

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of **Executive Operations**



21 January 2022

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen COVID-19 cases continue to increase substantially in NSW and the ACT, resulting in 237,339 positive cases being recorded in NSW over the past seven days, and 9,727 for the ACT. Similarly, the number of Residential Aged Care Homes experiencing an outbreak has increased in the past 7 days, with over 425 homes in NSW in outbreak and 15 in the ACT.

Warrigal currently has 7 care homes in outbreak with 126 residents currently testing positive. There are over 784 residents living in those homes, equating to about 16% of residents being positive. While this number is high, many of the residents have been positive for a number of days and there are a large number who are recovering, who are not displaying symptoms, and are now testing negative. Sadly and unfortunately this pandemic is severely affecting our community, and we have had 4 residents pass away with COVID-19 in the last week, all had underlying health issues. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families at this time.

Currently there are 118 staff testing positive (we have had 187 test positive since our outbreaks commenced) and are subsequently unable to work in the 7 homes, which is around 14% of the care workforce. We have had 69 staff recover and are now able to resume their duties under strict guidelines, such as returning a negative RAT, ensuring they are symptom free and feeling well, and being required to continue to wear PPE.

Since the update last week, the outbreaks at both Shell Cove and Goulburn have been lifted after consultation and advice from the local Public Health Unit (PHU). This is great news as the residents are no longer isolating and life is returning to 'normal', however, restrictions are being lifted in a measured and staged way. This is designed to minimise the likelihood of re-infection. Visits recommenced at Shell Cove yesterday and will start at Goulburn from Monday. Please contact the home to book in a visit.

Last week's update included information on the "Partnering in Care" program and we have had over 170 people apply and around 80 people complete the training. I have once again included information on the program for anyone that is interested in becoming a partner in care. The program is open to those with a close and continuing relationship with the resident/customer, and those who frequently visit the resident/customer to provide regular routine care and companionship.

The current environment is creating a lot of concerns and anxiety, and I would like to re-confirm that if any resident/customer tests positive to COVID-19, the family would be contacted directly and any changes in their condition would result in a further update. Please be assured that we will contact you immediately, and all other families who have a loved one at the home will also be contacted.

We are continuing to hold internal outbreak management meetings every second day which reviews the status of the residents/customers, staffing challenges, PPE stock and testing regime. In addition to these meetings, we are holding regular meetings with the PHU's, and where possible, having them attend the homes to provide advice on infection control. Our internal Infection Protection Control Coordinator has been to a number of the homes again this week to review staff practices.

Our "Booster Program" for staff continues to occur in the care homes. While this program was originally initiated for staff, I would like to provide a reminder that your loved one is also eligible to receive the booster vaccine if they haven't already and you can contact the care home to book in. The scheduling of clinics at care homes with remaining availability is outlined below:

Location	Date and Time
Goulburn	Tuesday 25th Jan, 9am - 12pm
Bundanoon	Tuesday 25th Jan, 2pm - 5pm
Shell Cove	Tuesday 1st Feb, 9am - 12pm
Warilla	Tuesday 1st Feb, 2pm - 5pm
Mount Terry	Thursday 3rd Feb, 9am - 12pm
Mt Warrigal	Thursday 3rd Feb, 2pm - 4pm
Queanbeyan	Tuesday 15th Feb, 10am - 4pm
Stirling	Wednesday 16th Feb, 10am - 4pm
Calwell	Thursday 17th Feb, 10am - 4pm

While this weekly newsletter will continue for all of Warrigal, many of you will have received an additional newsletter issued from homes in outbreak on Tuesday or Wednesday. We intend to provide two updates every week for homes in outbreak as the situation is evolving quickly, and we want to keep representatives and relatives informed. In addition, this week Support Services Staff went to care homes in outbreak and increased FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, and telephone communications between residents and families.

Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time, and please continue to provide feedback by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744, or by emailing us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours sincerely,

Lachlan McDonald

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Acting Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities