

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



1 October 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen vaccination rates continue to increase as NSW and ACT approach the 70% double vaccination target. It is, however, concerning that in most of the areas where Warrigal has residential care homes, community transmissions have been increasing. As I indicated last week, our roadmap to re-opening is based on several important principles, including the rate of community transmissions and advice from Public Health Units in the different locations with whom we continue to liaise with weekly. We are also conscious that there are still 50 residential aged care homes in NSW and ACT that are experiencing a COVID outbreak.

Our roadmap has been amended this week in view of the announcement in NSW that visits in aged care homes can commence from Monday 11 October 2021. While ACT Health has announced no changes, Warrigal has requested clarification on their position and whether we can implement similar changes to our homes in Canberra regarding visiting arrangements.

To ensure that we maintain our focus on safety while gradually opening up our homes to visitors, a COVID Steering Committee has been established to meet every week for the next month. A summary of the arrangements for NSW that are now in place are summarised below;

- Commencing on Tuesday 5 October, two fully vaccinated visitors can have one visit of up to two hours in the residents'/customers' room or outdoors.
- This will increase to two visits a week from Monday 11 October.
- It does not have to be the same two people visiting as long as they are fully vaccinated.
- They are, however, still restricted to one visit next week and two the following week, but for the sake of clarity, it can be different people.
- Evidence of the vaccination will need to be provided at the first visit. The staff will record this on a card to avoid having to produce it at future visits.
- Visits will need to be booked in with each of the homes directly and will occur when a Customer Service Officer or Concierge is working to undertake the screening.
- All outdoor visits still require visitors to be screened on entry and social distancing needs to be observed outdoors.
- No children under the age of 12 will be allowed to visit at this stage.
- Unvaccinated visitors will not be allowed to enter the home unless its exceptional circumstances, including end of life, which can be arranged with local management. In these cases, the visitors will need to wear full PPE.
- Residents/Customers cannot be taken out for social visits, however, this will be reviewed once the double vaccination rate reaches 80%.
- Bus outings will recommence for residents/customers, but only residents/customers from the same home can attend, and they will not be able to leave the bus.

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If there are changes announced from ACT Health, or we get a positive response to our correspondence, an update will be provided by the respective General Managers. We are excited and very pleased to recommence visits and to encourage social catch-ups for residents/customers and their respective families and friends. We request that you tolerate any issues that may be experienced over the next few weeks, as our systems and processes are fine-tuned as we work together to allow more interaction.

In addition to the updated visiting arrangements, we have ordered N95 face masks, which are better at filtering out very fine particles from the air compared to the surgical masks currently being worn. These will need to be worn by staff and visitors while the community transmissions remain high.

The trial of the Rapid Antigen Testing being undertaken at Queanbeyan finishes today. Next week we will review the learnings from this trial as we look to implement this testing at all of our homes based on a risk assessment being undertaken. We have also volunteered to participate in a trial being undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Health at Coniston that will run for four weeks. They have selected Coniston as it is in the Wollongong LGA, and considered to be in a high-risk area along with the Shellharbour LGA.

On Wednesday next week, we will be trialling a new automated visitor management system at our Albion Park Rail home. The system will replace the current paper-based sign-in sheets and manual temperature checks, and complies with the health and government requirements, while making the check-in process safe and easy. The check-in tablet will be in reception and will scan your face, take your temperature and will ask you to answer the screening questions on the tablet. It will then produce a visitor sticker for you to wear that lets everyone know you have checked in successfully. At the completion of the trial, we will look at utilising this technology in all of our homes.

Your feedback is always welcome and is important for us, and I thank you for taking the time to send through your suggestions and comments, which helps us to continually review our processes and to be as prepared as possible for the coming weeks. We want to continue providing a quality service, and to continue to work closely with all residents, customers and relatives. There are many ways to provide this feedback including contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or 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