

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



20 August 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives

The past week has seen the whole state of New South Wales forced into lockdown while the lockdown in ACT extended for an additional two weeks. There have been positive cases in Wollongong, Shellharbour, Goulburn, Queanbeyan and Canberra in the past week. While there have been no cases directly in Bundanoon, it remains a high-risk area due to its proximity to other locations with positive cases in the South West Sydney Local Health District.

The surge in case numbers particularly where Warrigal has locations means that we are reviewing daily the risk to residents based on the number of exposure sites, and the time that the person has been at the venue. If there are a large number of exposure sites, or there is one location which is considered a particularly high risk, it is possible that total restrictions to homes could be implemented at very short notice.

There are now over 30 aged care facilities across NSW experiencing outbreaks, while there are a number of other homes under enhanced surveillance, with one current outbreak in Canberra's south.

COVID-19 Cases – NSW

The number of positive cases in the past week continues to increase, with a record number of 3732 cases in the past week, which is an increase of 1451 from the previous week. The average number of cases over the past week is 533 cases a day. The significant increase in cases has resulted in the lockdown being extended until the end of September and more stringent rules being applied in the LGAs of concern including the following:

- Curfews will be applied at 12.01am on 23 August which will stop anyone in the LGA's of concern from leaving their home between 9pm to 5am.
- Outdoor exercise is limited to one hour each day.
- More retail outlets are closing and will only be using click and collect options.
- Authorised workers who work outside their LGA of concern are required to carry a permit from Service NSW.
- Wearing masks will be compulsory when outside except for exercising.

While these measures will not have a direct impact on any of the LGA's where Warrigal is based, they should reduce the number of community transmissions, which are spreading across many regional areas. The other significant change is that Shellharbour will be classified as Regional NSW and not considered to be part of the extended Sydney LGA from tomorrow.

The number of hospital admissions is now 470 with 80 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

As of 19 August, there are now 83 active cases associated with the current outbreak, including 16 cases in the previous 24 hours. There are currently no COVID positive cases in hospital, however ACT Health are working closely with the 19,200 people who have self-identified as a close contact, with over 240 exposure locations listed in the ACT.

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Visitor Restrictions

The following restrictions now apply to every home. Still, as I indicated previously, this could change at short notice at one or more locations if the risk escalates quickly with the exposure sites.

- Visits are only to provide essential care functions or if the resident is at end of life.
- All visitors must wear face masks.
- Visits must be in the resident's room.
- Only one visitor is permitted at a time, except at end of life.
- 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.

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.

Preparations

With the number of aged care homes experiencing an outbreak, the week we held a meeting with Southern NSW Local Health District to review our Outbreak Management Plan, and they will be following this up with an on site inspection at our Goulburn and Queanbeyan care homes.

The members of the Rapid Response Team held a meeting to review the following actions;

- All members of the team have mobile phones and laptops.
- Rooms being identified in each of the homes that would be utilised by the team if required.
- Outbreak Management Plans were refreshed.
- PPE Kits held in each member of the team and how they would be deployed to a home.
- Accommodation availability at each location.
- Contact with contractors.
- IT requirements.
- Updated data on staff and resident vaccinations.

The Rapid Response Team will continue to meet regularly to ensure that any further learnings from the meetings held with Local Health Districts are incorporated into the plans.

This is a very challenging time for everyone and we will need to be prepared to respond quickly as changes emerge. Over the past week we have also had family members turning up unannounced, requesting a visit despite not meeting the criteria from NSW Health, which unfortunately cannot be permitted.

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,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities