

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



15 October 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen a significant increase in vaccination rates, with 91.4% of people aged over 16 in NSW having received one dose of the vaccine, while 77.8% are now fully vaccinated. In the ACT, the percentage of the population over the age of 12 fully vaccinated is 74.7%. The stay at home orders in the ACT has been lifted from today.

The number of visitors entering our residential care homes has created some challenges for staff during the week, particularly if the visit has not been booked in, and there is no evidence of the vaccination status. If you are having difficulty downloading the vaccination certificate through Medicare, you can provide confirmation through the place that administered the vaccine and our staff can issue you with a card that can be used for all future visits. The number of visits to the care homes in NSW has generally been over 100, with less at the smaller homes, which all need to be safely screened in and provided with the appropriate PPE.

There are still a number of residents/customers that have not been vaccinated, which varies from 8.11% to 1.25%, with an average of 5.2% of residents/customers in each home that have declined to be vaccinated. This continues to be a risk, particularly as the community opens up and staff and visitors that may be fully vaccinated are exposed. Over the past two weeks, we have had 88 staff undertake PCR testing. Fortunately, all of them have returned negative results. It continues to be a risk that needs to be monitored closely, particularly as outbreaks in Residential Aged Care continue to occur weekly.

I have summarised below the current visiting arrangements that now apply to all homes along with some actions that have emerged from the past week:

- Residents/Customers at all homes can now have 2 visits each week from a maximum of 2 fully vaccinated visitors. It does not need to be the same visitors each time. Masks need to be worn throughout the visit, and if you want to have a coffee or food, this should be done outside or with a distance of 1.5m maintained and then the masks need to be put back on afterwards.
- The masks that are now required to be worn by staff and visitors have been changed to N95 masks which provide higher protection from airborne particles.
- It appears likely that there will be a Public Health Order issued in NSW requiring all Community Home Care Workers to now be vaccinated, and all staff in Residential Aged Care to provide evidence of their second vaccination by the end of October.
- A draft policy has been prepared on how we will implement Rapid Antigen Testing. This will require all staff, visitors, contractors and volunteers to be tested on random days over the course of a fortnight. These days will change over the two week period, with the intention to have three days one week and a different three days the second week. The frequency of the testing will be reviewed based on the number of community transmissions in the respective areas.
- We continue to prepare for an outbreak. One of the learnings from a recent outbreak that another provider has experienced was the impact of all staff having to be furloughed until PCR results were

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received. This impact could be minimised if staff were wearing N95 masks and goggles, and we are looking at identifying several key roles in each home that will wear this PPE on all shifts.

- The automated visitor entry system trial at Albion Park Rail has provided some valuable learnings this week, including using the system to ensure that the maximum number of visits in an hour is incorporated, and the ability to obtain information quickly and efficiently on the number of visitors and their contact details in the event that we would need to make contact immediately. The trial was anticipated to go for 6 weeks, but this has now been reduced to 4 weeks to expedite the rolling out of the system to all care homes.
- The executive review continues to be undertaken weekly regarding the arrangements that are in place and how these relate to the risk and safety of the residents/customers. If you have any feedback you would like to be considered at these reviews, please send them through, and I will ensure they are tabled.

Thank you for taking the time to send through your suggestions and comments, many of which were based on requests to visit where there has been no vaccination administered. Unfortunately, based on all of the above, this is not possible at this stage. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities