

6 January 2023

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



Dear resident representatives and relatives,

I hope that you all enjoyed the festive season and are looking forward to the New Year. Since the last update, the number of Residential Aged Care Homes experiencing an outbreak has increased with 915 homes experiencing an outbreak, an increase of 220 over a two week period. These numbers were anticipated given the high numbers within the community and the number of residents leaving the home to spend time with family and friends.

A COVID-19 outbreak in a care home is where two residents or five staff test positive, and while there have been five outbreaks being managed over the past month, the number of residents that were impacted in most of these have been low, and as a result, the outbreaks were closed within a short timeframe. There are currently two homes still with active cases, however, it is expected that these will be finalised in the coming days. A summary of these outbreaks is provided below;

Stirling: The outbreak commenced on 20 December 2022, and since this time there have been 19 positive cases and there are currently two active cases.

Goulburn: The outbreak commenced on 14 December 2022, and there is currently 1 active case.

With cases in residential care homes increasing across Australia, the reduction in outbreaks across Warrigal supports that the protocols were implemented in December are effective, and they will remain in place until at least the end of January. These are again summarised below;

- All staff, visitors and contractors must complete a Rapid Antigen Test daily when entering the care home.
- Surgical masks can continue to be worn in the home if it is not experiencing an outbreak.
- Anyone going into a community where there are positive cases must wear an N95 mask and eye protection. Other communities within the home they do not have positive cases, do not require eye protection, but an N95 mask must be worn.
- Visits into a room with a COVID positive case are still permitted, but full PPE must be worn.
- Unvaccinated visitors must wear an N95 mask, and the Visitor Management System will be updated to reflect this requirement.
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- Visitors that are close household contacts are not allowed to enter the care home unless it is for an end of life visit.
- Weekly surveillance testing will continue to be undertaken in all care homes.
- No more than five people, including residents are to be in a resident's room. If you intend on having a larger number attend, please make arrangements with the local management team.
- Residents who leave the home to spend time with family over Christmas will not be required to isolate on returning to the home, however, Rapid Antigen Testing will be undertaken for three consecutive days after returning.

At the end of last year, the Star Ratings for Residential Aged Care Homes were released as part of the Aged Care Reforms that are designed at providing more transparency to consumers. The overall rating is weighted based on four areas that are all given a rating from 1-5, with an overall rating of 3 considered to be an acceptable level of care. The ratings were provided to 2,558 homes, with some homes such as Wollongong not getting a rating as it must be operated by the current provider for 12 months. Of these homes, 54% had an overall rating of 3.

Residents' Experience—Residents are interviewed regarding their overall experience living in the home. This indicator is updated annually.

Compliance—This is based on regulatory decisions made by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, including any unmet requirements and outcomes from any audits. This can be updated at any time throughout the year based on site visits. It is important to note, that while the overall rating is based on all four areas, it cannot be higher than the Compliance Rating.

Staffing—This rating is determined by the number of minutes of care being provided to each resident by Registered Nurses and Care Staff, based on targets being set in the industry. While the ratings were distributed in December, the targets are not effective until October this year. Our rosters have been set on the numbers being incrementally increased over the course of the year to meet these targets by the required timeframe. An overall rating of 3 means that you are meeting the target required for October

Quality Measures—This rating is based on five quality indicators: falls and major injury, unplanned weight loss, pressure injuries, medication management and the use of physical restraint.

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While the Star Ratings are designed for consumers to make informed choices prior to moving into care, we understand that many current residents and family members will want a better understanding of how the ratings work and what it means for each care home. To support this, we will be preparing some Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, along with a separate communication on the ratings for each of the homes.

Finally, it was great to meet with so many residents and families over the past month, and your feedback was sincerely appreciated. I look forward to continuing to provide you with updates over the course of the year and meeting with you while visiting our care homes. 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