

12 February 2021

Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

It was an interesting week with a confirmed positive case in the Illawarra from someone who had tested negative during hotel quarantine, and then tested positive a few days after completing the 14 day isolation in quarantine. While we don't need reminding of how challenging this virus is to keep out of our homes, this latest development has reinforced the need to remain vigilant, and I am pleased that we still have no confirmed cases in Warrigal.

The focus in the past week has been on the Holiday Inn cluster in Victoria, as they prepare to go into another lockdown, while in NSW the total number of positive cases has increased to 4945, an increase of 17 from last week, all returned travellers from overseas. With no community transmissions for 26 days in NSW, some of the restrictions in the community are being eased, including the hospitality sector reverting back to the 2 square metre rule at indoor and outdoor venues.

The Ministry of Health in NSW continues to provide regular updates to aged care providers on the restrictions that need to be followed. I am pleased that there are no current restrictions on the number of visitors that a resident/customer can have at any one time or during the day, and they can leave the home for medical appointments or social outings. It is important for tracing purposes that if anyone leaves the care home, that you use the QR Code to sign in and out of the venue, which will record the time that you were at each location.

Last week, it was advised that the QR Codes would be utilised at our care homes, and after trialling the implementation at Queanbeyan and Bundanoon, I am pleased to advise that it is now available at all of our homes in NSW. We understand that some visitors do not have a smartphone and would be unable to scan in using the code, so to support them we will have an iPad at reception where staff will assist with the scanning process. It is still a requirement for the screening tool to be completed.

In view of the need for visitors to be screened, it is still important to contact the home prior to coming in so that the number of visitors can be managed. If the visit is inside the home, it is still mandatory for masks to be worn, however, they are not required for outdoor visits.

The Australian Government is responsible for leading the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination, and as indicated in last week's update, staff and residents in aged care will be prioritised for the vaccine. It is not known at this stage whether NSW Health will make it mandatory for visitors to have the vaccine, similar to the requirement for the flu vaccine. We will continue to keep you updated with information on the COVID-19 vaccination as it becomes available.

In the coming weeks we will be scheduling Zoom meetings for relatives that will commence in March, based on the feedback that was provided at the meetings held last year that you would like these to continue.

Please do not hesitate to contact Warrigal by email at warrigal@warrigal.com.au with any feedback you might have or by calling our information line on Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744.

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