

28 August 2020

Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

The focus on aged care has intensified this past week with the release of the Government's response to COVID-19, a findings report released on what happened at Newmarch House, and the Royal Commission hearings continuing looking at the funding constraints and the efficiency of the aged care system. Unfortunately there are now 126 aged care homes affected by COVID-19 in Australia, with over 1700 elderly residents suffering from the virus.

I am pleased that at this point in time, there are still no confirmed cases at Warrigal.

Community transmission of COVID-19 continues in the eastern states, including areas of Melbourne and regional Victoria, south-western and other areas of Sydney, and more recently in south-east Queensland. This remains a concern to NSW residents, particularly those who live in the affected regions of Sydney and the border communities. The Chief Health Officer in NSW has recently written to all aged care providers to ensure that the Outbreak Management Plan has been updated, staff can demonstrate competency in infection prevention and control and there are sufficient stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Our Outbreak Management Plan was reviewed again this week by the Quality and Compliance Team to ensure that the tasks and responsibilities were clear and consistent with the requirements from NSW Health. The PPE training module from the Department of Health, as well as our own internal training modules on infection control and PPE, were made compulsory for all staff to complete. We continue to closely monitor our PPE usage to ensure we have sufficient supplies to manage in the current environment, which includes 90,000 face masks a month. This all comes at a significant cost to Warrigal, but is essential to remain vigilant and focused on safety.

There were 20 key findings in the Newmarch House report, and these findings have all been reviewed and risk-rated by Warrigal on our preparedness. One of the areas that we identified where improvement can be achieved is maintaining an emergency contact register for each resident where a minimum of three contacts may be registered. Those contacts must be confirmed by the resident or their legally appointed representative. We may be in contact with you in the coming weeks to obtain these contact details if they are not already known.

In the past week, Warrigal have participated in meetings with all three of the Local Health Districts that cover our geographical area. These meetings covered a range of subjects including the following;

- Workforce planning and the support that the LHDs could provide with Registered Nurses.
- Accessing PPE in the event of an outbreak
- Undertaking assessments in our homes outside of Illawarra on infection prevention and control
- The use of rapid response kits if an outbreak occurs to obtain results within 2 hours
- The importance of having Advanced Care Directives in place that reflect the preferences within a pandemic

We will continue to meet with all of the Local Health Districts regularly to ensure that we are constantly improving our preparedness and establishing protocols that would be followed in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.

In preparation for Father's Day, we have provided additional Samsung tablets to each home to record messages from the residents about the significance of the day. There will be gifts arranged, special lunchtime meals and additional staff will be working to facilitate calls to families or visits in the Safe Visiting Areas. While we hope to accommodate your requests for a visit, it may not be possible to facilitate all requests, however, we will look reducing the time of the visits slightly to accommodate more families. To determine if this will be required, could you please contact the management team of the local home to advise if you are interested in utilising the Safe Visiting Areas on Father's Day.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and while I continue to recognise and thank you for your continued support, I am sincere in my gratitude, and understand that this is a very challenging time that would be even more difficult to manage without your support and understanding.

You can call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm, if you have any further enquiries. You can also email us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au with any feedback you might have or for more general COVID19 advice please contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Yours Sincerely,



Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities