

19 March 2021

Warrigal Update

Dear resident representatives and relatives

The past week has seen the continued rollout out of the COVID-19 vaccine program for residents living in residential aged care homes. As at 18 March 2021, the total number of vaccinations of Australians eligible in the first phase (1a) is close to 250,000, including aged care residents, frontline healthcare workers along with quarantine and border workers.

On Monday this week, we received advice that the Australian Defence Force would be administering the vaccinations to our residents at Coniston on Thursday. While we have been organising to have consent forms completed, and the majority were received, it was still important to advise relatives that it was being undertaken. Most were contacted directly by staff at the home to make them aware of the updated information. This is the third home to now have the first dose of the vaccination administered, while our home at Stirling had the second dose administered this week. We are not aware of any other Warrigal homes that have been scheduled for next week, but this could change at short notice, so our focus over the next few days will be on finalising the consents for Albion Park Rail.

It is our intention to have all of the consents finalised over the next two weeks, with most of the care homes already having close to half of them completed. This will mean that on the date of the vaccination, we will need to check that the resident is feeling well, take their temperature, and then focus on setting up the area, allowing for two residents to be vaccinated at a time, and then monitoring them for at least 15 minutes after the vaccination. There have been no side effects recorded for any of the residents that have received the vaccination to date at Warrigal.

This week, we commenced the Zoom meetings for relatives, with Bundanoon on Tuesday and Shell Cove on Thursday. It was good to provide an update on what is happening in the sector, although the number of relatives attending was less than the previous meetings. We will continue to hold these meetings for the next 6 weeks for all homes, and depending on your feedback, we may only schedule future meetings if there was a significant change to the current arrangements.

With the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine continuing, I have included below some questions and answers that have been raised by staff and relatives;

Who is in Phase 1b?

Elderly adults aged 70 and over, Healthcare Workers not covered in Phase 1a, which includes most of Warrigal's staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, adults with serious medical conditions as defined by the Government, adults with a disability who have a specified underlying medical condition and critical & high risk workers including defence, police, fire, emergency services and meat processing workers.

Who will get which vaccine?

The Phase 1a persons will receive the Pfizer vaccine. The Phase 1b persons will receive the AstraZeneca vaccine. People cannot make their own choice of vaccine.

Where will Phase 1b persons get their vaccination done?

Phase 1b vaccinations will be done in local General Practices. Strict regulations as to vaccine storage, preparation and administration, education of vaccine givers, registration on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) etc have been mandated by Federal Department of Health

How do I organise an appointment for my vaccination?

This will vary from vaccination centre to vaccination centre. Some practices are using a waiting list. Some are accepting appointments on the internet. Some are offering appointments by email, SMS or mail. Read your practice information or ask the receptionists.

How much will I be charged?

Nothing. The Government has mandated that all vaccinations will be bulk billed and there is no charge for the vaccine.

Can I have my flu vaccination at the same time?

Current advice is that people should not have a flu vaccination for two weeks either side of the COVID-19 vaccine. Flu vaccination is a critical part of our COVID-19 avoidance strategy.

The Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) that was mentioned last week will be commencing on 1 April 2021. The Scheme requires every residential aged care service to adopt a systematic approach to minimising the risk of and responding to, serious incidents involving residents. It is important that we have an incident management system in place to manage the risk to our residents. I have included some additional information for your information on SIRS.

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,



Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities