

9 October 2020

## Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I am pleased to confirm that there are still currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Warrigal.

The past week has been a reminder that we cannot be complacent with this virus, as NSW went 12 days without recording a positive swab outside hotel quarantine, and then there were eight positive cases in two infection clusters within 48 hours, with the numbers expected to increase. While this has not resulted in visiting restrictions being imposed at any of our care homes, this could change at short notice based on advice from NSW Health.

The Federal Budget was delivered this week, and while it was pleasing that there were funds provided for home care packages, unfortunately there was no additional funding for residential care including resources for infection control. Warrigal is still committed to ensuring that each of our homes receives additional support with infection control and will be looking at utilising existing internal resources and providing them with the appropriate training.

This week the Quality and Safety Commission audited three more Warrigal homes at Goulburn, Queanbeyan and Coniston. The focus of the reviews was on our COVID preparedness and they reviewed minutes of meetings, the compliance with training in infection control and PPE, the roles of the Rapid Response Team and the collaboration with the Local Health Districts. These homes have both been reviewed by the respective Local Health Districts and action plans have been prepared to strengthen existing processes. The Quality and Safety Commission indicated that they were satisfied with the information that was provided.

It is important for Warrigal to have current email addresses and mobile phone numbers so that we would be able to facilitate Zoom meetings, particularly in the event of a COVID outbreak. Over the coming weeks, representatives from Warrigal, including our CEO, Mark Sewell, will be hosting Zoom meetings with family representatives from our residential care homes, commencing on 22 October with our Bundanoon home. The purpose of these meetings is to use another medium to communicate with relatives which also allows family members the opportunity to provide us with feedback. Invitations to the first meeting will be sent next week, and we will then look at scheduling meetings with all care homes in the coming weeks.

There has been a lot of information provided over the past eight months regarding the planning, preparation and communication that would occur in the event of an outbreak, including what constitutes an outbreak. In order to capture a lot of this information a Frequently Asked Questions document has been prepared that will be published on our website. A sample of the types of questions in the document are included below:

- How will Warrigal identify if there is a COVID-19 outbreak?
- What steps are being taken by Warrigal to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the homes?
- If a staff member tests positive to COVID-19, how will my loved one's care be affected?
- Will their care be compromised now that the staff member is not there?
- If we have concerns or the outbreak gets bigger, can I temporarily move my family member out of the care home and into my home?

While we will be applying for additional funding to facilitate more family visits in the care homes, we will also be providing training to a number of volunteers to assist staff. Our preference is to gradually increase the visits within the home, but we understand that some families would prefer to take their loved one out of the home for a short visit. These requests would need to be risk assessed by the respective manager, and would include the requirement for PPE, flu vaccinations for the family members, the number of people in the car and the home and the duration of the visit.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again thank you for your support, which is communicated through our social media and emails sent each week.

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](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au) with any feedback you might have or for more general advice you may want to contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600.

Yours Sincerely,



**Craig Smith**  
**Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities**