

10 March 2021

COVID-19 Update

Dear Customers,

I am pleased to advise that the NSW Department of Health removed the restrictions that were previously implemented for staff to wear face masks when entering your home. Our staff are still screened at the beginning of each shift to ensure that they do not have a high temperature and have not been to any areas classified as high risk, and are required to observe social distancing where appropriate.

The past few weeks has seen the rollout out of the COVID-19 vaccine commence in a number of residential care homes in Australia. The Commonwealth has engaged teams from Healthcare Australia, Sonic Healthcare and Aspen Medical to come to each home and administer the vaccine, with staff from Warrigal supporting them in establishing a designated area within the care home. The initial advice from the Government was that residents in aged care homes, along with frontline care staff would be in the first cohort to receive the vaccination. In total there were to be about 1.4m doses administered to those listed as the first priority.

Unfortunately, the number of doses provided have not been sufficient to meet all of the categories initially identified in the in the first priority, so while all residents will be eligible to receive the vaccination, only a small number of staff will receive it. This will only be staff working in the aged care home at the time the vaccination is administered.

This will mean that the majority of staff will be in the second group to receive the vaccination, along with anyone over 70 years of age. There will be up to 14.8 million doses of the vaccine administered in this group, and while we have not yet been provided with any specific details on whether there will be vaccine clinics established, we understand the importance of ensuring that everyone receiving services through Warrigal has the opportunity to receive the vaccine.

It is an important decision, and we respect the right of every person to make an informed decision on what they consider is in their best interests. In order to assist you, I have attached some information on the vaccine that you may find valuable. If you would like some information in another language, please contact your Coordinator. I can assure you that while we are encouraging our staff and customers to receive the vaccine, your services will continue to be provided regardless of your decision.

You may also be aware that the Aged Care Royal Commission released 148 recommendations recently which the Government will be considering and providing a response to by the end of May. One of these recommendations is to have all of the current people waiting for a home care package allocated one by the end of the current year. Warrigal welcomes the recommendations and we are very hopeful that many of you receiving Commonwealth Home Support Services may receive more services through a Home Care Package throughout the year.

It has been a very challenging time over the past 12 months, but with the vaccine rollout and the current processes that are in place to ensure your safety, I am hopeful that we will be able to grow our service offerings and have more people benefiting from having support at home.

Thank you for your understanding as we continue to work through this process.

Please do not hesitate to contact Warrigal by email at warrigal@warrigal.com.au with any feedback you might have or by calling your Coordinator or 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