

29th November, 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 9th November '21 and provides information about our plans for the third dose of COVID-19 for residents and staff. As usual, this information is being shared with our residents and their representatives, our workforce including our volunteers and contractors, our local general practices, our company members, and the wider Southern Highlands community.

3rd dose COVID-19 vaccine in-reach clinics

A 3rd or booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine is now recommended to provide added protection for people who received their 2nd dose more than 6-months ago.

A 3rd dose of COVID-19 vaccine will be offered to residents and members of our workforce on 9th December 2021 (Burradoo) and 10th December 2021 (Moss Vale). The free clinics are scheduled to start at 9am, but as the clinics are run by Sonic Healthcare the exact time will depend on the arrival time of their team.

The dose is available to any resident or worker who had their 2nd dose on or before 9th or 10th June 2021 i.e., at least 6-months before the date of the clinic. We have a register of residents and staff who are eligible, which will form the basis for our planning.

If you are a worker who had your 2nd dose at one of our clinics earlier this year and you have already had your 3rd dose, then please notify Leah Willis (leah.willis@harbisoncare.org.au) so she can update our register.

GPs are being contacted to review clinical suitability of residents prior to the clinics. Residents will be required to sign a new COVID-19 vaccination consent form at the clinic, prior to receiving their 3rd dose.

We continue to maintain 100% vaccination rates for our workforce and 92% and 98% of our residents at Moss Vale and Burradoo respectively are fully vaccinated.

Harbison

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www.harbisoncare.org.au

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ABN 23 001 507 624
Registered NDIS Provider

Burradoo

2 Charlotte Street
Burradoo NSW 2576
F 02 4868 6476

Moss Vale

36 Yarrowa Road
Moss Vale NSW 2577
F 02 4869 3214

Opting out of the 3rd dose

The 3rd dose is strongly recommended. However, if you are a substitute decision maker and wish to opt out of the 3rd dose on behalf of a resident, then please contact Sushmita Bista (Burradoo) on 02 4868 6219 or Kritika Bhattarai (Moss Vale) on 02 4868 6349 to make the necessary arrangements.

Substitute decision makers will be required to sign a new consent form for the 3rd dose, and staff will contact you to organise that paperwork.

Support people are welcome at the clinics

Support people are very welcome on the day of the clinics, provided they are fully vaccinated and meet current screening requirements.

If you intend to attend one of the clinics to provide support to a resident, then please notify Leah Willis (leah.willis@harbisoncare.org.au) prior to the clinic to assist with planning.

What happens if I am not eligible for the clinic?

If you had your 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine less than 6-months ago, then you are not eligible for the upcoming clinic. The focus of the clinics is ensuring that all residents who were vaccinated early in the national rollout receive their 3rd dose now. For everyone else, the 3rd dose is available from your GP, pharmacy, or NSW Health vaccination hub.

Two visitors per resident per day (plus two children)

Meanwhile, residents are permitted to have two fully vaccinated visitors per day plus two children aged under 12. Surgical masks are mandatory, and visits must occur outdoors or in the resident's room i.e., not in communal areas. Visitors are requested to minimise their interaction with staff and other residents.

End-of-life visits

Residents at end-of-life are permitted four visitors (including children) at any one time and are not subject to the daily limit. Unvaccinated visitors are permitted if they have a negative rapid antigen test on the day of and prior to their visit.

Rapid antigen tests are available from supermarkets or pharmacies, or we can conduct the test for a nominal fee of \$15 at the time of visit, which can be paid at Reception or the Office.

Like other visits, end-of-life visitors must wear surgical masks and conduct their visit in the resident's room. However, unlike other visits masks may be removed during the visit.

Changed conditions of entry apply to everyone except residents

The Omicron variant of concern has resulted in changes to screening protocols.

You may not enter Harbison if you:

1. have COVID-19 signs or symptoms
2. are not fully vaccinated i.e., a 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least 14-days prior to your visit, unless you are under the age of 12 and accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult
3. are a close or casual contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case who is within their isolation period (staff may return to work if they are a casual contact, after they return a negative PCR test)
4. are waiting for a COVID-19 test result
5. have been overseas in the past 14-days, unless
 - a. you are fully vaccinated and have a negative PCR test results on or after the 7th day of arrival in NSW, or
 - b. you are a fully vaccinated member of an international flight crew and have a negative PCR test within 24-hours of arrival in NSW or a negative rapid antigen test on the day of and prior to your visit, **and**
 - c. you have **not** been in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Malawi, or the Seychelles
6. do not have a current influenza vaccination
7. are living with a close contact of a COVID-19 case

Points 2 and 6 do not apply for end-of-life visits if you have a negative rapid antigen test on the day of and prior to your visit, but all other screening requirements apply to end-of-life visits.

Please monitor NSW Health for the latest public health advice as the Omicron situation develops: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/racf-latest-advice.aspx>

If you work at Harbison and have international visitors or recent arrivals staying in your household then you must notify your manager immediately so we can monitor the risk of transmission.

Application for reaccreditation – please let us know how we are doing

We are currently waiting for an unannounced site audit of Moss Vale by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to determine whether we will remain eligible to continue to provide government-funded aged care. This is a normal part of the re-accreditation process for approved aged care providers. Soon we will also lodge our re-accreditation application for Burradoo.

As long-term residents know, this process happens every three years and is vital to the sustainability of our service. On average, the government provides Harbison with \$180 per resident per day in recurrent funding to subsidise the cost of care. If we lose our accreditation, then this funding may be withdrawn.

As part of the re-accreditation process the quality assessors may speak with anyone, including residents, staff, and family and friends. Normally, a sample of at least 10% of residents will be selected. The purpose of these interviews is to help determine whether we are meeting the minimum standards required under the Aged Care Quality Standards.

We encourage you to reflect on the following statements and provide us with feedback if you have suggestions for improvement or do not think we are achieving the expected standard. We value your input so we can improve our care and services. Note that “consumer” is the term used by the regulator for residents and, where appropriate, their representatives.

1. I am treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain my identity. I can make informed choices about my care and services, and live the life I choose.
2. I am a partner in ongoing assessment and planning that helps me get the care and services I need for my health and well-being.
3. I get personal care, clinical care, or both personal care and clinical care, that is safe and right for me.
4. I get the services and supports for daily living that are important for my health and well-being and that enable me to do the things I want to do.
5. I feel I belong and I am safe and comfortable in the organisation’s service environment.
6. I feel safe and am encouraged and supported to give feedback and make complaints. I am engaged in processes to address my feedback and complaints, and appropriate action is taken.
7. I get quality care and services when I need them from people who are knowledgeable, capable and caring.
8. I am confident the organisation is well run. I can partner in improving the delivery of care and services.

The site audit process is very strict, and we are required to pass every question without exception. If you do not agree with these statements, please let us know what we can do to improve. We will notify you when a site audit commences and provide you with opportunities to speak to the quality assessors if you wish.

Altura – online training for workers

Our teams have started using a new online training system called Altura. The system provides access to a rich library of information designed to help our staff improve or maintain their skills and knowledge. The available content provides a much deeper learning experience than previous systems.

Everyone, including me, is currently working through our mandatory education to ensure we have the most current aged care information relevant to our roles. We have split the required learning into modules to give everyone a fair chance to complete their education over a reasonable time. Aged care is changing fast as the Government begins to implement post-Royal Commission reforms, so we want to ensure that our staff have a system which supports them to stay current with their aged care knowledge.

If you are having any trouble with the new system, please let the People & Culture team know so they can arrange help. So far 52% of us have commenced the new learning journey and 40% have completed it. Well done! That's a great start, but everyone must complete their mandatory training. If you have not started, please prioritise it this week otherwise you will find yourself with a lot to do when the next module is released, and you may find yourself having a difficult conversation with your supervisor.

Thank you for reading this letter. We welcome your feedback and thank you for your ongoing support and understanding through the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Cochran', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Cochran

Chief Executive Officer