



Wednesday 29th December 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter yesterday, 28th December 2021. It provides a general update about the COVID-19 staff exposure at Harbison Burradoo. As usual, it is being widely circulated as part of our commitment to transparency.

Staff exposure – update

We now have three staff who have returned positive rapid antigen tests for COVID-19. We also have two staff who are symptomatic but have so far tested negative. These staff are isolating pending a PCR test.

We anticipate staff availability to further reduce and have therefore stood up our 12-hour outbreak shifts to increase our capacity to work around staff shortages. We invite staff to speak to their managers about their availability to work additional or varied hours in the next two weeks, including split shifts.

Staff who work the outbreak roster are rewarded with significantly higher rates of pay and additional leave accrual. Managers can provide further information. The 12-hour shifts only apply to direct care staff.

As a precaution, we are also standing up the 12-hour outbreak shifts at Moss Vale.

The staff lounges at both sites are closed and staff are required to minimise movement around the homes. Where movement is necessary, staff are trained to change PPE between areas. Staff who are sharing households with staff from other facilities are required to wear tier-3 PPE during their shift.

Mandatory rapid antigen testing prior to each shift remains in place.

Resident exposure – update

There are no residents in the affected wings at Burradoo showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, and all tested negative to rapid antigen tests yesterday. Residents will be tested again later this week in accordance with the latest guidelines for moderate to high exposure risk.

However, at least one resident in an affected wing has been exposed during a family outing on Christmas Day. We have been notified that a family member has since become unwell and tested positive. The resident is not showing signs or symptoms, has tested negative to rapid antigen testing, and is isolated in their room.

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Visitor restrictions - update

To relieve workload for staff we are restricting visitors at Moss Vale to one fully vaccinated visitor-per-resident-per-day, in line with the current restrictions in the unaffected areas of Burradoo. We anticipate that it may become necessary to close to visitors for a time at both sites if staff shortages become severe.

End-of-life visits remain available regardless of vaccination status, subject to other screening requirements and a limit of four visitors at any one time.

Resident outings & emergency leave

We are temporarily prohibiting resident outings except for essential medical appointments.

We remind you that emergency leave arrangements are in place to permit residents to temporarily return to a family home during the pandemic without using their social leave entitlement. If you are concerned about visitor or social outing restrictions or an outbreak this option may provide a solution for residents with lower care needs.

If you choose to take emergency leave, the Commonwealth Government can provide basic care support services for up to eight weeks. These entry-level services include meals, transport to medical appointments, social support, unaccompanied shopping, personal care, nursing, and allied health and therapy services.

To find out more about these services simply contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. The enclosed fact sheet provides further information. If you decide to take emergency leave, please contact our Admissions & Engagement Officer, Elisha Molloy, by email at admissions@harbisoncare.org.au or phone 02 4868 6400 during office hours.

Note that emergency leave during an outbreak operates slightly differently.

Conclusion

We remain hopeful that early detection using rapid antigen testing will protect our residents from an outbreak. However, the risk remains moderate to high. We are taking steps to maximise our workforce capacity in anticipation of increasing numbers of isolating or unwell staff.

We will continue to provide updates and are in direct contact with families of any unwell residents. We are working to provide virtual visits to isolating residents as soon as possible. Our focus remains containing the risk of transmission, caring for our residents, and supporting our workforce.

We are sorry for any inconvenience or anxiety caused by this situation and assure you that we are working carefully to minimise the risk of an outbreak. All restrictions will be for the shortest possible time, and we expect to have more certainty by Tuesday 4th January 2022.

Yours sincerely,



David Cochran
Chief Executive Officer



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION FOR PERMANENT AGED CARE RESIDENTS

Emergency Leave

29/06/2021

The Government has determined the COVID-19 pandemic is an emergency situation. The period of this emergency is from 1 April 2020 until 30 June 2022. Emergency leave is available now for permanent aged care residents during this period.

The availability of emergency leave means that between the dates above, residents will not need to:

- use their social leave entitlements
- pay their aged care provider further fees (in addition to what they already pay) to secure their place.

This fact sheet explains the emergency leave provisions for aged care residents.

Use of emergency leave during the COVID-19 pandemic

You can use emergency leave to take temporary leave from your aged care home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government has determined this emergency leave:

- covers all permanent aged care residents from all services across Australia
- dates back to 1 April 2020
- is available until 30 June 2022.

You cannot take emergency leave for the COVID-19 pandemic outside of these dates.

Do I have to pay any fees while on emergency leave?

When you take emergency leave you must continue to pay your:

- basic daily fees
- means tested care fees
- daily accommodation payments.

This is the same as when you take social leave.

During this time, the Government will continue to pay the aged care subsidy to your provider. You won't pay further fees to retain your place at the aged care home.

Discuss with your aged care home any concerns around paying these fees, including if you experience financial hardship.

Can I take emergency leave now?

Yes. If you feel safer staying with family who can provide you with care, you can take emergency leave. The current pandemic is an emergency situation. Emergency leave is available from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2022.

If you wish to take leave from your aged care home you should:

- speak with your aged care provider
- tell them that you wish to take emergency leave.

Can I use emergency leave for a hospital stay?

No. Emergency leave does not cover hospital stays. If you are admitted to hospital during the emergency leave period, you must take hospital leave while in hospital.

What help is available in the home if I want to live with my family during COVID-19?

A national model of emergency support is available through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). This is for aged care residents who choose to take emergency leave and temporarily move out of residential care due to COVID-19.

Tier 1 Clinical support for residents who temporarily re-locate from an aged care home that is significantly impacted by COVID-19

Temporary clinical support is currently available to residents who have had to relocate from a significantly impacted residential aged care home. Personal care and nursing services equivalent to a Level 4 Home Care Package can be accessed at no additional cost.

If your aged care home is significantly impacted by a COVID-19 outbreak, they will advise that this support is available if you take emergency leave.

Aged care homes cannot, however, force you to take emergency leave. It must be a voluntary choice made with your family.

You or your family can then call the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on **1800 700 600** to discuss your care needs. OPAN will provide information on your eligibility, things to consider and the process for temporarily withdrawing from an aged care home. If you decide to transition to the community, OPAN can refer you to a suitable local CHSP provider to deliver clinical services in the family home for up to eight weeks.

Services that may be accessed through this program include:

- Personal Care: assists to maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and grooming
- Nursing: clinical care provided by a registered or enrolled nurse. This care is to treat and monitor medically diagnosed clinical conditions.

No fees will be charged for Tier 1 CHSP supports.

Your aged care home will need to work with you, your family and the CHSP provider:

- To develop a care plan
- To determine a suitable care start and end date
- To plan any arrangements to transition the resident back to the aged care home.

Your family will be responsible for your care and safety during your time away from the aged care home. It is important that you properly consider your living arrangements. This includes reviewing access to mobility aids, the capacity to provide care for 24 hours per day and a suitable physical environment.

Residents who require more complex or higher level aged care services may need to remain in their aged care home. They can also be temporarily transferred by their aged care home to another suitable care facility.

Residents receiving Tier 1 will also need to contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 to obtain the additional Tier 2 supports detailed below.

Tier 2 Entry-level services available for all people who decide to return to the community

If you are not eligible for Tier 1 support, but choose to return to the community, you can access CHSP entry-level home support services for up to eight weeks. This is regardless of whether your aged care home has been impacted by COVID-19. Residents who access Tier 2 services may need to pay a client contribution fee for services where they can afford to do so.

To access Tier 2 services residents or their family can contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**. My Aged Care will provide:

- information on the services available
- details on the process for transition to the community
- a referral to a CHSP provider.

This support is available to all residents returning to the family home from an aged care home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Services that can be accessed through the CHSP include:

- Meals
- Transport (essential trips to medical appointments only)
- Social Support Individual
- Unaccompanied Shopping
- Personal care
- Nursing
- Allied Health and Therapy Services.

It is important to understand that these services will be entry-level. They will not provide the same level or frequency of care available in an aged care home. If you need more complex or higher level aged care services you should remain in your aged care home.

Things your family must consider before transitioning out of your aged care home to the family home:

- accommodation requirements – you will need a separate bedroom, and if possible a separate bathroom; is the bed accessible, and the correct height
- internal and external access to the home – are there stairs, is a ramp required, are doorways/hallways wide enough for a walker, are there trip hazards
- mobility aid requirements – shower chair, walker, toilet rails, transport

- 24 hour care is required to be provided by your family and can be supplemented with some professional support by a CHSP provider
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be required if you and your family need to quarantine. Families must know how to use PPE, including gowns, face masks, eye protection and gloves. PPE must be purchased prior to you coming into the family home
- general day to day living assistance – toileting, showering, meals, dressing, administering medications
- how to manage your transition back to the aged care home.

You should not leave the aged care home until services have been put in place. You and your family should stay in close contact with your aged care home to discuss:

- your care plan
- any issues
- organising your return to the aged care home at the appropriate time.

Your aged care home and CHSP provider should also discuss your care needs and the provision of services that have been organised.

What happens if I do not want to go back to my aged care home?

This support is not intended to be ongoing. If you decide to stay in the community on a long term or ongoing basis, you will need to give up your place in your aged care home. You will then need to arrange for a home care services assessment through My Aged Care. If the assessment indicates you require a Home Care Package (HCP), families should be aware that there are waiting times for a HCP.

Find more information about HCPs and average wait times on the My Aged Care website at: www.myagedcare.gov.au/assessment-decision-home-care-packages.

Although you can access entry-level CHSP services while waiting for a HCP, once you have relinquished your place in the aged care home, you will not be eligible to continue accessing Tier 1 services. You and your family must carefully consider whether entry level services will be sufficient to support you while on the wait list for a HCP.