

17 March 2020

**Anglican Care Advice to Consumers, Carers and Families - COVID-19 Update**

Dear Consumers, carers and families,

Further to my earlier correspondence, we have decided to implement further strategies to protect our consumers, employees and volunteers in response to COVID-19. As you can imagine, this is a very dynamic situation and recommendations are changing daily. We will endeavour to keep you informed of changes as they occur. We appreciate your continued cooperation and understanding.

Our main priority is protecting the health and wellbeing of consumers within our care. Anglican Care is working closely with local authorities and any strategies implemented are based on recommendations from the Department of Health & the Hunter New England Local Health District. From 18 March 2020 we will be applying further measures to protect our consumers from a potential COVID-19 outbreak.

COVID-19 has been found to be an extremely high risk for those over 80 years old. Anglican Care has taken significant measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our consumers receiving a home care package, attending one of our day therapy centres and residents living in our retirement villages or residential care homes, and anticipate your support with this public health issue. We would like to reassure you that our employees attended refresher training in infection control in recent weeks. The training included appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette. World Health Organisation (WHO) resources including videos were utilised to demonstrate best practice. Our employees have been advised they are not to attend work if they are unwell and are required to notify their manager if they have respiratory or flu like symptoms, have travelled overseas or been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19. Anglican Care has acquired additional stock of PPE available for our staff and consumers. This is for your safety and that of our employees. Our employees know when to use PPE and how to apply safely.

Consumers receiving a home care package will be asked a series of screening questions related to your health, prior to an employee entering your home, and observe for the signs and symptoms of influenza like illness at each visit. Any signs or symptoms of concern will be discussed with you and reported immediately to your Care Advisor or Manager who can consult with our Nurse Practitioner. As a reminder, the criteria for flu or influenza like illness includes the following:

- Sudden onset of at least **one** of the following three respiratory symptoms:
  - o Cough (new or worsening), Sore throat **OR** Shortness of breath
- **AND** at least **one** of the following four systemic symptoms:
  - o Fever, Malaise (feeling tired or a bit under the weather), Headache **OR** Myalgia (muscle pain, ache or soreness)

Following the recommendations from the Australian Government and the Department of Health, we have implemented the following strategies to protect our consumers:

1. All entry points to our residential aged care homes, Alkira Centre and East Lake Macquarie Dementia Service (ELMDS) will remain locked other than the main entrance which will be secured.
2. Family visiting our residential care homes will be restricted to two (2) visitors each resident during the times of 9.30-3.30pm. All visitors will go directly to the consumers' room and not be in any communal areas.
3. The main entrance will be the sole entry point for all people entering any of our sites, including staff and contractors.
4. Consumers, carers, contractors or visitors are required to speak to a staff member prior to being able to access the residential care home or centre. During this discussion each person will be asked:
  - Have you recently returned from overseas travel including cruises?
  - Do you have any flu like symptoms?
  - Do you have a fever?
  - Have you been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?A positive answer to any of these questions will result in access to the facility being denied.
5. Screening also includes recording of temperature, using an infrared medical grade thermometer. Any person with a temperature in excess of 38 degrees Celsius will not be admitted except with the express approval of the Manager who will consult with Anglican Care infection control specialist and relevant member of the Executive Team.
6. Apply sanitiser on entry and exit of the site.
7. Hand hygiene will be compulsory throughout the day for all attending Alkira and ELMDS.

Our care advisors, registered nurses, allied health professionals and home care employees will conduct similar screening with you before entering your home.

As a safety precaution we have temporarily relocated our Alkira operations and activities to our ELMDS Centre at Belmont. We believe this is a responsible measure to reduce the risk of exposure to consumers attending our centre and residents living at Kilpatrick Court residential care home. As you are aware construction of our new Alkira Centre at Booragul is nearing completion, which is exciting, with planned opening in mid-May. We are currently assessing if we may be able to access the new centre earlier. In the meantime we will continue to co-locate at Belmont until further notice.

We understand there is a lot of information and media reporting on COVID-19 and you may be feeling overwhelmed or uncertain what to do. If there is anything we can do to help please let us know. We have taken measures to purchase additional supplies for our retirement living residents and home care consumers for emergency situations. There may be other things we haven't thought about so please tell us.

Anglican Care is currently reviewing all scheduled visits to minimise the number of employees providing care to you in your home. Our team of managers, care advisors and administration staff will continue to consult with you about any changes. We are heading into times where we may experience a reduced workforce, for example, if schools close or if our employees are unwell or placed in isolation. We appreciate your flexibility and support as we continue to work on ways to reduce risks to you and our workforce. We understand it is important to keep you safe and well, and that continuing to receive the care and support you need through our service and other health professionals is essential.

Such times remind us that we must remain vigilant in the prevention of infectious disease transmission. Practicing good hand hygiene and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against the spread of respiratory disease. We have attached guides for you, your family or visitors to refer to.

Anglican Care is using the "CDNA National Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Public Health Management of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities in Australia" to guide its decision making in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. As these guidelines are reviewed and reissued by the relevant authorities, Anglican Care will take actions to vary its response in line with those provisions.

If you are concerned about your own health or wellbeing at any time please contact your care advisor or our nurse practitioner.

If you have a concern about any aspect of your care or want to know more about the steps that we are taking please contact your service manager or me directly.

Attached is a form to complete if you and a family member would like to receive updates electronically. You can also visit our website: [www.anglicancare.com.au](http://www.anglicancare.com.au)

If you would like further factual advice about the virus you may be interested in the information published on the Department of Health website:


<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-need-to-know>

Alternatively, contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Yours sincerely



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