

25 June 2020

**Anglican Care Advice to Consumers, Families & Friends – COVID-19 Update**

Dear Consumer, families and friends,

This week, the NSW Minister for Health has announced a review of the Public Health Order issued in March. Relating to visitation, from this week there have been some minor amendments to the legislated restrictions into residential aged care facilities. One of the primary changes to this legislation is that those aged 16 and under are now able to visit their relatives in residential aged care facilities. Any children visiting the facility will require proof of influenza vaccination and are included in the 2 visitor maximum (i.e. the maximum visiting numbers would be 1 adult and 1 child).

There have also been amendments for those visitors with established patterns of care and support. From this week, the two hour time limit for those who have been identified as having established patterns of care and support has been removed. This means these visitors are able to resume previous patterns and can visit the facility multiple times in a day. If you fit into this category, you will already have arrangements in place with your residential care manager.

Influenza vaccinations continue to be mandatory for anyone entering a residential aged care facility. NSW Health have issued a form to be completed by the GP for anyone with a medical exemption yet to provide proof of medical exemption to the facility. Under the Public Health Order, there are no other exemptions for emergencies (i.e. to visit those nearing end of life) allowed. The Public Health Order has now extended to the 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2020. Please remember that this order is a legislative requirement from the Government and not a directive from Anglican Care. Any breaches of this order can result in a fine of \$10,000.

We have communicated previously that we are implementing our visitation restrictions in line with the 'Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes'. This document enables a consistent structure for visitation across the aged care sector. Along with the code, we are also required to abide by Public Health Orders and State Government legislation. Throughout the COVID-19 period, the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) has been making recommendations on behalf of the Federal Government. It is then the responsibility of each State to enact and implement these recommendations. There will be variances between the recommendations from the Federal Government and the way in which each State applies them. Unfortunately, this results in a some information that is conflicting and sometimes confusing. If you would like clarification regarding the application of these documents at Anglican Care, please contact Anglican Care's Infection Prevention Coordinator – Kate McEwan ([katemcewan@anglicancare.com.au](mailto:katemcewan@anglicancare.com.au)). Effective from today, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 the 'Rules of Entry' to all Anglican Care facilities are: -

- Visitation is by appointment only on Picktime.com or by prior approval from the Residential Care Manager
- All visitors are to adhere to screening processes and directions from Anglican Care employees
- No admittance for any visitor with any COVID-19 risk factors (i.e. temperature >37.5°, any cold/flu like symptoms, recent exposure to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or recent travel to COVID-19 'hot spot' (i.e. Melbourne))
- Maximum 2 people per visit (this includes children)
- Proof of Influenza vaccination must be provided on entry or entry will be denied. This includes children
- All visitors are required to clean their hands with hand gel or soap and water on entry and exit of the facility

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Providing Aged Care Services

Home Care - Residential Care - Retirement Living

Regions

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- All Visitors will be escorted into and out of the building and must remain in their designated area (i.e. resident room, designated visiting area or outside) throughout the visit. Visitors are not permitted in communal areas (i.e. dining rooms)

This year has been unlike any other, however, our requirements for implementing outbreak management processes remain unchanged. As we move through the traditional flu season, there will be an increased number of consumers with symptoms of cold and flu. In line with Public Health guidelines, an outbreak is to be called in a facility if 2 or more residents are exhibiting signs and symptoms of cold/flu. In line with Anglican Care's infection control guidelines and recommendations from Public Health, visitors are unable to enter a facility during outbreak. This may result in unexpected cancellation of visitation. As we always have, we will communicate any potential outbreaks and any temporary changes to our visiting times at the affected facility. We ask for your patience and understanding should a potential outbreak be required.

We acknowledge and understand that this has been an extremely stressful and frustrating time for many in the Anglican Care community. Over the last few weeks there have been increased reports of verbal abuse and threatening behavior towards our employees. This will not be tolerated. Our employee's primary focus is to care for our residents, and no one deserves to feel unsafe in their workplace. Any visitor that is verbally aggressive or threatens an employee will be asked to leave. Failure to do so, will require escalation to police. Please remember that this is difficult for all consumers, families and staff, remember to be patient, understanding and recognise that we are all trying to do our part to protect our residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have received many enquiries regarding the ongoing plans for further relaxation of our visiting restrictions. The recent developments in Victoria have demonstrated how quickly things can change in the wider community. We are hopeful that if the situation remains unchanged in NSW, we can implement more open visitation across Anglican Care facilities from the middle of July. We will continue to communicate regularly with you and will outline the specifics of further relaxations closer to the date.

We thank everyone for their continued support and understanding. If you have any enquiries, please contact the Residential Care Manager.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colin Osborne".

Colin Osborne  
**Chief Executive Officer**