



23 December 2021

Dear Residents and Relatives,

### **COVID-19 Update #42**

As you are aware, NSW Government has announced some adjustments to their [pandemic management measures](#) in response to the significant increase in COVID-19 cases in the community.

#### **From 12.01am Friday, 24 December 2021**

- Masks will be compulsory in all indoor non-residential settings, including for hospitality staff and in office, unless eating or drinking.

#### **From 12.01am Monday, 27 December 2021:**

- QR code check-ins will be compulsory, including for hospitality and retail and Hospitality venues, including pubs, clubs, restaurants and cafes will move to 1 person per 2 sqm rule indoors, with no density limit for outdoor settings.

**Further these measures, the Government is asking people to reduce mingling where they can, including when eating and drinking, work from home where possible and hold events outside.**

For more details to the current COVID-19 rules, please refer to <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/rules>

### **What about to residential care residents and visitors then?**

In light of the updated '[Industry Code for Visiting Aged Care Homes](#)' which was released on 22 December 2021, and the latest guidelines advised by NSW Health, we have updated our policy as follows:

#### **1. Visiting to Nursing Home**

- All visitors must wear at least a surgical mask and/or additional PPE such as goggles/face shields for eye protection as directed by the facility staff inside the facility. Some visitors may be required to wear P2/N95 masks and face shield depending on the activities these visitors are involved.
- Visiting duration and visitor numbers are restricted by the booking schedule **for shared meeting venue** (unless obtained prior agreement from facility manager);
- Visitors are strongly encouraged to provide evidence of negative COVID-19 PCR test result within 72 hours, or visitors may be required to take a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to entry (please follow the direction given by each facility and note that RAT takes at least additional 30-45 minutes for the

process to be completed. We appreciate your patient and cooperation to complete the additional screening for the protection of everyone in the facility).

- Residents are permitted to have no more than two visitors aged 12 years and over, plus two children aged under 12 years per day. **However we will assess the risk daily. We may have to limit visitors to one visitor per day per resident and no children under twelve, or implement further restrictions based on evolving COVID-19 transmission data.**
- Visitors aged 12 years and over must have received a second dose of a COVID vaccination at least 14 days prior to their visit.
- Children under 12 years are permitted to visit provided they are accompanied by a fully vaccinated person.
- Where visits include a child under 12,
  - the visit needs to take place in an outdoor area;
  - the child should wear a mask;
  - the child will be required to provide evidence of negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours or receive Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) prior to a visit.
- Visitors will be allowed in resident's room if it is a single room, or in a designated visiting area assigned by the facility;
- Visitors will not be allowed in communal area;
- People who are providing a service to the resident (including a health or other professional service) are not counted as a visitor.
- Existing requirements in the Public Health (COVID-19 Care Services) Order 2021 on visiting residents who are at end of life remain in place.

## 2. Appointments, outing or attending family gatherings

- Residents are permitted to leave the facility for appointments, attend family gatherings or for other reasons but must abide by the current [Public Health \(COVID-19 General\) Order 2021](#).
- Residents are required to receive a risk assessment by the Facility Manager who could advise the residents and their families' risk to leave the facility.
- No one at the gathering / event
  - has been a close contact of a person with confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days;
  - lives in a household with a person who is currently self-isolating;
  - is waiting for a COVID-19 test result.
- Residents and the persons responsible for taking the resident out are reminded that they should ensure COVID Safe behaviours must be observed including practicing physical distancing (1.5m) and hand hygiene at all times.
- Residents who leave the facility to attend a family gathering should on return have a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) on days 2, 4 and 7 after they return. If well, residents do not need to isolate. If they develop any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 they should immediately be isolated and have a PCR test.
- Facilities will ensure that residents are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment, infection control and mask wearing advice if they leave the facility. See the latest [face mask rules](#).
- If a person cannot wear a face mask because of a disability, physical or mental health illness or condition, they must carry either:
  - a medical certificate or letter signed by a registered health practitioner (such as a doctor) or a registered NDIS provider or

- a statutory declaration.

### 3. **Visitors must not enter the facility at all if they**

- have [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- are a close or [casual contact](#) of a person with confirmed COVID-19 unless they have completed their self-isolation and testing requirements. [Close contacts](#) should not enter high risk settings for at least 14 days since their exposure to a COVID-positive person.
- are waiting for a COVID-19 test result.
- have been overseas in the previous 14 days, unless they are:
  - fully vaccinated and have received a negative PCR test 7 days or later after arrival in NSW.

### 4. **COVID-19 Outbreak definition and what to expect**

- From 20/12/2021, a COVID-19 **outbreak** is defined as either a resident who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 via PCR test, or two or more staff/visitors diagnosed with COVID-19 through PCR test within 72 hours of working/visiting during their infectious period.
- An **exposure** is defined as one COVID-19 positive staff member or visitor to the residential aged care facility who attended during their infectious period.
- In the event of our residential aged care facilities have a COVID-19 outbreak or exposure, the facility management will conduct a risk assessment and take action accordingly to each group of people with high to low exposure risks. Public Health Unio will provide additional advice and guidance at the time.
- Affected residents and relatives will be contacted directly while other stakeholders will be notified in due course.
- Isolation and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) protocols and measures will be implemented.
- We will request all residents to stay in their own rooms. During this period, we will bring meals, drinks, medicines and therapy services to their rooms for a few days until the exposure risks are controlled.
- Additional surge workforce agency staff will be used through the Commonwealth COVID-19 support program to care for the residents. While we endeavour to request Chinese speaking staff, this has proven to be difficult though all surge workforce are trained carers.
- Regular COVID-19 testing will be carried out until the risk of outbreak is managed and an end of outbreak is declared by PHU.

### 5. [COVID-19 Booster Dose](#)

Free boosters are available to anyone 18 years and older who received their second dose at least 5 months ago. Residents and their person responsible for care will be informed by your facility / care manager when the government's immunisation team is coming to provide COVID-19 Booster Dose. Your consent will be obtained prior to the dose being given.

We strongly urge our residents' relatives to consider taking up the COVID-a9 booster dose. Please check when you received your second dose by looking at the date on

your vaccination certificate. A booster vaccination can be booked through the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

### **Updates to Public Health Orders or other COVID-19 news**

There have been several recent [updates](#) to Public Health Orders. More information on the [Public Health Orders and restrictions](#) is available.

### **Communication**

We appreciate your understanding that we may have to proceed swiftly in response to the COVID-19 situation. We will use other means such as telephone call or SMS to contact you, in addition to email at times of urgency. Please do not hesitate to contact our Facility Managers if you have any questions.

### **Wishing you a safe and peaceful Christmas and happy New Year!**

This year every one of us certainly had its very challenging moments as the ongoing effects of the pandemic have been felt across all society, but none so strongly as health care and, particularly, aged care.

As we are approached the end of 2021, the Board and Management of ANHF thank you for your understanding and support over the past 12 months.

We wish you a safe Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Chua  
General Manager, Care Services

