Being COVID Prepared over the Festive Season

Wednesday, 22 December 2021

Paul Sadler – CEO

Derek Dittrich - Executive Director, Government & Public Relations

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Aged & Community Services Australia

ACSA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Public Health Orders by State

State and Territory Orders can be found here

To view the webinars for each state and territory to understand the public health order for your jurisdiction go to **Department of Health webinars**

State/ Territory	Residential Care Mandatory First Dose Deadline	Residential Care Mandatory Second Dose Deadline	Home Care/CHSP Mandatory First Dose Deadline	Home Care/CHSP Mandatory Second Dose Deadline
ACT	17 September	1 December	1 November	29 November
NSW	17 September	25 October (4 December for other workers (eg. Health Practitioners / Students)	25 October	29 November
NT	17 September	31 October	13 November	25 December
QLD	17 September	31 October	24 November (to allow mandated second dose by deadline)	15 December
SA	17 September	Show evidence of booking second dose by 17 September	30 November	Within ATAGI recommended period after first dose for chosen vaccine
TAS	17 September	7 January	30 November	7 January
VIC	17 September	15 November	22 October	26 November
WA	17 September	17 November	1 December	1 January

# Planning with your staff for an outbreak

- Steps you can take to make sure your staff are prepared include:

  - Make sure all staff know who will lead a response to an outbreak on each shift

  - Remind team leaders or shift supervisors about how to activate the outbreak management plan.

  - Make sure your leadership team is contactable after hours and on public holidays – consider an on-call roster.

- Review your resident and workforce vaccination status.

- Review your workforce management plan so you have options for sourcing surge workforce if you need it:

  - Remember you may need to replace all types of staff: personal care workers, and cooking and cleaning staff to administration and management staff

  - Make sure you have a plan on how to orientate surge workforce and who will supervise these staff.

- In-Home Care providers should have emergency plans in place for all clients. Staff should be aware of these plans and be able to implement if regular care staff or care recipients are infected by COVID-19. In-home care providers must continue to deliver aged care services even if the care recipient is in quarantine or isolation.

Communication with families during an outbreak

- In the event of a COVID-19 case, you need to inform:

    o   residents or consumers

    o   staff and contractors

    o   primary family contacts

    o   resident advocates (if a resident with cognitive impairment)

    o   any identified stakeholders such as executive management team, other co-located services i.e. retirement villages, primary medical care providers.

- Your outbreak management plan should have some pre-prepared email templates already drafted for this initial communication, personalised for your service and including contact phone numbers.

- Inform staff that they should not work at any other facility during the outbreak.

- Providers with multiple services should consider whether communications are required for the other sites

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Communication resources & templates

- **The National COVID-19 Residential Aged Care Emergency Communication resources** provides guidance on communication in advance of, and during, a COVID19 outbreak.

- **Communication Guide Templates**

- Frequently asked questions about **workforce** in a COVID-19 outbreak

National COVID-19 Residential Aged Care
Emergency Communication Guide
August 2021
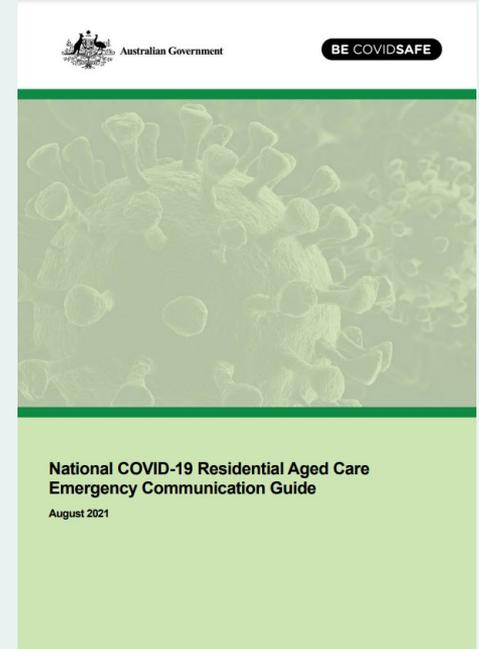
COVID-preparedness resources & templates

- Check your COVID management plan readiness against the **Outbreak Checklist**

- A guide to the **first 24 hours** in managing a COVID-19 outbreak in a residential aged care facility.

- Advice on **how to prevent and prepare for a COVID-19 outbreak in RACFs** or for **in-home aged care services**

- Advice from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) on how to prepare an **outbreak management plan**

- Guidance from the **Victorian Aged Care Response Centre** on how to **establish and maintain communications in the event** of a COVID-19 outbreak.

- Advice from the ACQSC on **lessons learned from previous outbreaks**

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COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plans by state

- Australian Capital Territory – Outbreak Management

- Northern Territory - Outbreak Management

- New South Wales – Outbreak Management

- Queensland - Outbreak Management

- South Australia - Outbreak Management

- Tasmania - Outbreak Management & COVID@Home Program

- Victoria Outbreak Management

- Western Australia – Outbreak Management

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COVID Booster vaccine

- Letter from the Chief Medical Officer regarding the importance and additional protection that boosters can bring

  - For residential aged care **providers**

  - For **residents**

- ATAGI has released guidance on the **adjustment in the booster program timing** [now from 5 months from second dose] and the **introduction of a Moderna booster vaccine**

- The **information kit on boosters** and all associated materials have now been updated

- All residential aged care facilities are being offered an in-reach booster clinic delivered by a Commonwealth vaccine provider. Facilities can also choose to have a visiting GP or pharmacist conduct a booster clinic on-site or, where approved, to deliver their own booster clinics.

- Each facility will be **supported by their Primary Health Network as the main point of contact** for the booster roll-out.

Grant Opportunity – Home Care & CHSP Providers

- Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) providers can access emergency funds for costs associated to support staff to get vaccinated. This includes costs associated with staff taking leave to attend a vaccination clinic, or activities that encourage staff to get vaccinated, such as transport to and from a vaccination clinic.

- CHSP providers can also access emergency funds for costs associated with collecting and reporting the vaccination status of their workers. CHSP Providers do not have to apply for these funds in advance of undertaking these activities.

- CHSP providers can apply for funding via GrantsConnect (GO3877) at **www.grants.gov.au** and applications close on 30 June 2022. The Home Care Packages COVID-19 Vaccination Support **Grant is now open (GO 5216)**

- The purpose of the Home Care Packages Program COVID-19 Vaccination Support Grant (Grant) is to provide additional support to Home Care Package (HCP) providers to increase COVID-19 vaccinations in the home care workforce and to provide accurate reports on the vaccination status of the workforce to the Government

Grant Opportunity – Aged Care

- Providers can claim for eligible costs associated with staffing to manage broader care requirements as a result a direct impact of COVID-19.

- This includes: costs for additional and replacement staff (including employees brought in from other services); costs for agency staff to replace staff who are isolating; and increased wage costs (over and above the BAU salary for those staff) where increased hourly rates or overtime are paid.

- The grant also reimburses the following eligible costs, where they were incurred during an impact period: the purchase of additional PPE; the purchase of additional products / services to manage cleaning and infection control; equipment and resources and waste removal costs

- Approved Residential Aged Care, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP) and Home Care Package providers are also eligible to apply.

- For more information please see the **Grant Opportunity Guidelines (Grant Opportunity – GO4863)** and regularly updated responses to frequently asked questions available on GrantConnect.

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Visitor Access Code

The Visitor Code makes it clear how we can balance infection control measures with the social supports that keep older people connected, happy and healthy.

- The Visitor Access Code has been updated as of 22 December 2021

  https://acsa.asn.au/COVID-19/Vistor-Access-Code

- The revised code:

- Includes an 'Essential Visitor' policy which requires that residents are always permitted to have at least one visitor, regardless of the COVID outbreak status.

- Outlines three categories of Visitor status, each with its own infection prevention and control measures, ranging from Green when there is no COVID threat to Red when there is an outbreak in or adjacent to the facility.

- Is revised for easy of use and understanding.

Aged Care Provider Peak Organisations	Aged Care Consumer and Carer Peak Organisations
• **Aged & Community Services Australia**	• Carers Australia
• **Anglicare Australia**	• Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia
• **Baptist Care Australia**	• Dementia Australia
• **Catholic Health Australia**	• Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
• **Leading Age Services Australia**	• National Seniors Australia
• **UnitingCare Australia**	• Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

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Letters to Ministers

- ACSA/LASA letter to all Federal, State and Territory Health Ministers re importance of national consistency on furloughing staff, visitation arrangements and access to RAT; and

- AACC letter on Monday to Ministers Hunt and Colbeck re lack of workforce response in MYEFO or in response to our November workforce statement.

For more information

- If you require further support or guidance, you can contact ACSA by phoning 1300 877 855 or email **memberconnect@acsa.asn.au**

- Alternatively, you can refer to your **state/territory Department of Health**

- Visit ACSA's **COVID-19 planning, preparedness and management** webpage which includes the **COVID-19 information document** for ACSA members

- For information on staff vaccinations visit the support Hub - **https://supporthub.agedservicesworkforce.com.au/**