

Substantive new content since last letter from Chief Health Officer dated 29 July:

- Addition of Bankstown LGA for visitor restrictions
- Infection prevention and control preparedness advice

Dear Residential Aged Care Facility Director

Thank you for being responsive to implementing measures to prevent introduction of COVID-19 into your facility.

The outbreak of COVID-19 continues in Victoria and the outbreak in NSW, first detected in South Western Sydney and associated with the Crossroads Hotel in Casula, has now spread to some other areas. While the initial focus of cases in Victoria was in metropolitan Melbourne, there is a number of cases in some areas of regional Victoria.

It is crucial that all residential aged care facilities maintain vigilance to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into your facility.

Infection prevention & control - staff training and competency requirements

I would like to highlight the importance of comprehensive infection prevention and control preparation in our COVID-19 response. As part of your outbreak preparedness, facilities should ensure that:

- There is an infection control lead or champion at the facility
- Staff are well trained and can demonstrate competency in infection prevention and control, particularly use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Sufficient stocks of PPE are held on site.

There are a number of excellent resources available to support staff training specific to residential care facilities and staff. These are attached to this letter.

Local Health Districts have been asked to support local facilities in preparedness.

Public health advice on screening and entry restrictions

Given the current risk of COVID-19 now in the community please implement the following measures.

All facilities:

- Ongoing: staff or visitors with fever $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ or respiratory symptoms¹, even mild, **should be excluded** from the facility. They should be advised to isolate at home and seek COVID-19 testing.
- Ongoing: any visitors or staff who have been in Victoria in the previous 14 days **should be excluded** from the facility (noting there are special arrangements in place for people living and working in communities along the NSW/VIC border, refer: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules/border-restrictions/guide>).

¹ Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore/ scratchy throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell

- Until further notice: any visitors to any residential aged care facility who have been in the following local government areas in the previous 14 days **should be excluded** from the facility: **Bankstown**, Waverley, Woollahra, Randwick, eastern part of City of Sydney², Parramatta, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wingecarribee and Wollondilly.
- Ongoing: all aged care staff who reside in the above local government areas or a NSW/VIC border community **must wear a surgical mask while in the facility**.
- Ongoing: staff and visitors who have visited any of the locations on the same date as a COVID-19 case (see updated list of venues and dates at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>) should be excluded for a period of 14 days since their visit to the listed location. **It is important to regularly check the website, as this list may expand.**

Additional steps for facilities in the above LGAs and NSW/VIC border communities:

- Ongoing: all residential aged care staff who work in residential aged care facilities located within the above local government areas and in communities along the NSW/VIC border **must wear a surgical mask while in the facility** (irrespective of where they live or have visited).
- Until further notice: residential aged care facilities in the above local government areas **should not allow any visitors** (visitors performing essential caring functions may be allowed but must wear a mask). In exceptional circumstances, seek advice from your local NSW Health public health unit on 1300 066 055.

Measures such as phone or video calls should be made available to all residents to enable continuation of communication with family, friends or others who are not allowed to enter the facility at this time.

Please note that some residents may react with discomfort to seeing staff wearing surgical masks. Consider supporting tools to manage this (eg: show a photo with the staff member's face uncovered), should it occur in your facility.

If you would like more information, please contact your local NSW Health public health unit on 1300 066 055.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kerry Chant PSM
Chief Health Officer, NSW Health
30 July 2020

² Suburbs: Sydney, Surry Hills, Darlinghurst, Woollloomooloo, Potts Point, Rushcutters Bay, Elizabeth Bay, Eveleigh, Alexandria, Beaconsfield, Rosebery, Eastlakes, Centennial Park

NSW Clinical Excellence Commission resources

Personal Protective Equipment training

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/keep-patients-safe/COVID-19/personal-protective-equipment>

Escalation framework

http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/595754/COVID-19-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Response-and-Escalation-Framework.pdf

Commonwealth Department of Health Resources

Infection Prevention & Control

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidelines-for-infection-prevention-and-control-in-residential-care-facilities>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-aged-care-sector/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-for-the-health-workforce-during-covid-19>

Personal Protective Equipment resources – multiple languages

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/05/coronavirus-covid-19-when-to-use-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care.pdf>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/translated/coronavirus-covid-19-when-to-use-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care-other-languages>

Training Modules - Specially developed for aged care

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/new-covid-19-e-learning-modules-now-available>

Personal Protective Equipment Videos

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/coronavirus-covid-19-wearing-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care-video>

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission resources

Infection Protection and Control

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resources/are-you-alert-and-ready>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/cdna-guidance-for-symptom-monitoring-in-health-and-aged-care-workers-during-the-covid-19-outbreak>