

18 September 2020 – Advice to Residential ACF

Our ref: H20/103056-1

### Key points

- Access restrictions have reduced to certain areas in Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Victoria and Queensland
- Advice will be reconsidered next week based on the incidence of COVID-19

Dear Residential Aged Care Facility Director

Community transmission of COVID-19 continues in some areas of the eastern states. All residential aged care facilities must maintain vigilance to prevent the introduction of COVID-19. As transmission has been limited in recent days, some of the recommended restrictions have been eased. Further declines in incidence of COVID-19 may provide an opportunity to lessen current restrictions next week.

Please:

- minimise staff **working across different aged care facilities**
- designate an **infection control lead or champion** at your facility
- ensure all staff are **well trained** and can **demonstrate competency** in infection prevention and control, including PPE (see: <http://cec.health.nsw.gov.au/keep-patients-safe/COVID-19/personal-protective-equipment> for training resources)
- ensure **sufficient stocks of PPE** are held on site
- ensure you have a robust process for **entry screening all staff and visitors**
- **exclude all staff or visitors:**
  - with **fever 37.5°C** or higher, or respiratory **symptoms**<sup>1</sup>, even mild, and tell them to isolate at home and seek COVID-19 testing
  - who have **been in Victoria** in the previous 14 days (exceptions exist for staff in NSW/VIC border communities with a valid border permit)
  - who have **visited any of the venues** at the same time as a COVID-19 case listed on the NSW Government website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>)
- **exclude visitors** who have been in the following **areas** in the last 14 days:
  - In **NSW**: Bankstown (part LGA), Blue Mountains LGA, Cumberland LGA, Fairfield LGA, Hunters Hill LGA, Liverpool LGA, Mt Druitt (suburb), Parramatta LGA, Randwick LGA, Waverley LGA, Woollahra LGA
  - In **QLD**: City of Brisbane, City of Ipswich, Lockyer Valley Region, Logan City, Moreton Bay Region, Redland City, Scenic Rim Region, Somerset Region
- ensure a **surgical mask is worn while in the facility** by:
  - **all staff** who work in, reside in, or have visited in the last 14 days, the areas listed above, or a NSW/VIC or NSW/QLD (Tweed Heads to Woodenbong) border community. This includes **when on breaks and** when undertaking **non-contact tasks** where they cannot physically distance from others.
  - **all visitors** along the NSW **border with QLD** from Tweed Heads through to Woodenbong.

**Certain people who would otherwise be excluded may visit** after a risk assessment is done. These include:

- in **NSW/VIC border communities**, visitors who have not had exposure to areas of transmission in Victoria in the past 14 days

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

- those who have been excluded as a result of visiting the areas listed above yet have **compassionate** reasons (e.g., imminent end of life of a close relative, friend or by clergy) or who are **essential carers**. For these, the added precautions are strongly advised:
  - the visitor is **escorted directly to the room** of their loved one and must **remain within the room** for the duration of the visit. If the resident does not reside in a single room, a designated outdoor area or alternative room where distance from other residents can be achieved is required. At the completion of the visit, the visitor is to be **escorted directly out** of the facility.

Visits by these persons should meet the following criteria:

- they have **no fever or symptoms**
- the facility **records their contact details**
- there are no more than **two visitors** at a time and children closely supervised
- they **wear a surgical mask** while in the facility
- **hand hygiene is** facilitated

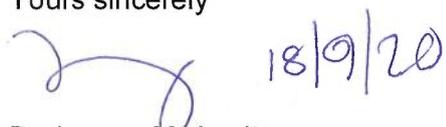
If unsure, a risk assessment may be done in conjunction with your local NSW Health Public Health Unit.

The Public Health (COVID-19 Aged Care Facilities) Order (No 3) 2020 commenced on **18 September**. The Order makes a minor amendment to the previous Order, being that persons with a temperature of 37.5 degrees or higher will not be permitted to enter a residential aged care facility (previously the temperature was *higher than 37.5* degrees to prevent entry).

If you need additional public health advice, see:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/aged-care-faq.aspx> or contact your local NSW Health public health unit on 1300 066 055.

Yours sincerely



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**Executive Director, Health Protection, NSW Health**