

TO: RCH RESIDENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

FROM: CEO – Graham Reed

DATE: 1st May 2020

In response to the advice of the Prime Minister, Chief Medical Officer and SA Health, and as indicated last week, we lifted the restrictions on visitors to residents living in our Hope Valley and Glynde Residential Care Homes on Wednesday.

I have visited both homes since Wednesday and observed the screening process that has been introduced for visitors in action. By all accounts, everything that was put in place to screen and monitor the entry and movement of visitors at both homes has worked well and it was pleasing to hear how appreciative residents were of the chance to catch up with their loved ones again.

Staff I spoke with were very complimentary about the conduct of visitors who were following the guidelines put in place around the number of visitors allowed and the length of the visit.

Apparently three families were not permitted to visit their loved one today as they were unaware of the requirement that everyone entering a residential care home from today – 1st May – has to produce evidence that they have received the 2020 influenza vaccination.

To avoid disappointment in future, all visitors need to be aware that they will be required to provide one of the following documents confirming their Flu vaccination before they will be allowed to visit their loved one:

- a statement or record from a health practitioner
- an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app
- a signed statutory declaration (this is not the LHI COVID-19 visitor screening declaration all visitors are required to sign prior to entry).

Visitors only need to provide the proof of vaccination evidence once as they will be issued with an LHI card on their first visit and they can use that card for all subsequent visits.

I particularly want to thank all those who have visited their loved one since Wednesday. Without exception, everyone has been respectful of the requirements and complied with the directions we have put in place.

Thank you also to our staff who have responded so well to the changing circumstances of these past 6 weeks. Yesterday, I chatted briefly to one of the General Practitioners who was leaving our Glynde Residential Care Home after seeing a resident, and his unsolicited comment was – “this is a well-run place; you should be very proud of your staff”.

On a more sobering note; whilst it has been wonderful to see the positive outcomes of lifting visitor restrictions this week, we must be under no illusions that the threat of a coronavirus outbreak in one of our homes has ended. Even though South Australia has recorded 8 consecutive days with no new cases of the virus, we know from what has happened in the eastern states that it only takes one individual to bring the virus in.

We also understand, based on the experience of Dorothy Henderson Lodge (Baptistcare) and Newmarch House (Anglicare) in NSW, the dire impact the virus has on frail older people. The consistent advice to all is that we cannot afford to be complacent.

As we continue to monitor the situation at both homes can I again remind everyone who visits their loved one to assume that you have the virus and your aim is not to spread it to anyone you meet. Social distancing, using cough etiquette and by regularly washing your hands for at least 20 seconds are standing requirements for all of us.

I have included a photo I took yesterday afternoon at the Glynde Residential Care Home screening desk simply to illustrate just one of the measures we have put in place to keep the virus out. Every visitor is being signed in, having their temperature checked, producing vaccination evidence and signing a declaration. We will need everyone's continuing cooperation to be screened – for the foreseeable future - so that together we can keep the virus out of our homes.



Finally, for anyone who has yet to download the Federal Government's COVIDSafe app, can I encourage you to do it? Over 3 million of us across Australia have downloaded the app and you can too, simply by going to the AppStore or Google Play on your smart phone and registering your details. Once you have completed the installation you will need to ensure that Bluetooth is turned on - especially whenever you are out and about in the community.

Downloading this app will help to protect all of us and our loved ones.

Graham Reed
CEO