

## Illawarra Diggers COVID-19 UPDATE: Monday 7 September 2020

### Update Letter to Families and Visitors

Monday 7 September 2020

Dear Family Member and Visitors to Illawarra Diggers

One month ago I wrote and expressed concern that the outbreaks were not under control in Victoria. Distressingly the situation has not eased in in Victoria with more deaths reported in aged care every day. Our employee/trades/visitor screening we undertake in our reception area has grown from a two page document to a four page document as the government advises more local government areas and hotspots from which people are excluded from aged care. This is updated daily and sometimes more often.

At Illawarra Diggers our primary focus was, is and will continue to be the health and safety of every one of our residents and every one of our staff. As I have noted in previous letters, we are all very appreciative that health and wellbeing included more than just physical health. It is the health of the mind and spirit too.

This pandemic has put unexpected and unwanted stresses on all of us. Our residents have to live with an increased reality of physical isolation from their families and close friends

Last month I also set out some of the initiatives our lifestyle team have introduced. If you have any requests or suggestions please contact Vikki, Debra, Kayleigh or Sophie on their general email address at [lifestyle@illawaradiggers.com.au](mailto:lifestyle@illawaradiggers.com.au);

For administrative issues relating to appointments or other matters please contact [admin@illawaradiggers.com.au](mailto:admin@illawaradiggers.com.au).

The following procedures are unchanged from the previous letter.

In regard to Point 5 below, some families have said they have been unaware of their ability to discuss their concerns or to make requests in regard to a particular resident. All families and friends are very welcome to raise any concerns or make any requests they deem appropriate to the health and wellbeing of our residents. We will be happy to discuss options and to achieve a resolution of the concern.

Visitors to Illawarra Diggers - Ongoing

1. The home remains closed to all unauthorised visitors;
2. This will be reviewed on a daily basis with updated information from various agencies to ensure the health and wellbeing of our residents and staff;
3. I will communicate with families and residents every two weeks to update everyone on any changes;
4. As soon as we are able to re-open to visitors we will communicate this to families immediately;

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5. We will continue to assess each special request case on its merits so as to ensure we keep the physical and spiritual health of our residents as our primary consideration.

#### Resident Appointments - Ongoing

1. We will continue to facilitate residents attending external medical and health related appointments that need to be attended;
2. Families need to advise the office prior to the appointment date and make the necessary arrangements, including date, time, location and duration of the appointment and a list of names and contact details of anyone who will accompany the resident.
3. Please be aware that if the correct procedure is not followed i.e. if the appointment forms are not filled out or the residents does more than just attend the appointment without full disclosure then, for the protection of the other residents and staff, the resident may be required to remain in isolation for up to 14 days on return, which absolutely none of us wants.
4. Families accompanying residents are asked to consider wearing a mask to provide additional protection to our vulnerable residents.

#### Staff Procedures - Ongoing

In line with aged care facilities in the affected zones close to Wollongong and also consistent with all state run facilities and aged care homes in NSW, from Monday 3 August our staff have been required to:

1. Complete a full disclosure questionnaire when they start each shift and have their temperatures taken and recorded by another, designated staff member;
2. Wear surgical face masks in all common areas and resident private areas where there is likelihood of encountering a resident. At present staff will be permitted to remove their masks when in care stations and offices provided they are able to maintain safe distancing.

As previously advised, if you wish to deliver anything to your family, you will need to do so in office hours, Monday to Friday. The office staff will accept the delivery and ensure it gets to your family member.

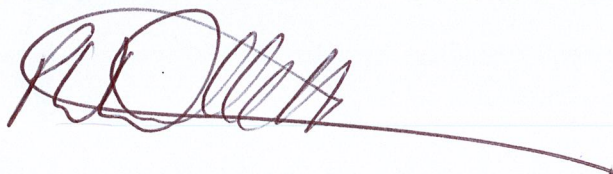
Should you require further information regarding COVID-19, please refer to the Commonwealth Department of Health website:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

We will continue to update our procedures and protocols in line with government guidelines and to communicate with our residents and our families and Illawarra Diggers community.

As always, Illawarra Diggers will continue comply with all government directives and to make informed conservative decisions to ensure the best outcome for our residents and staff.

Yours sincerely,



**Peter Whittall**  
CEO

Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care