

13 April 2021

Dear members of the Bethany Christian Care Family,

COVID UPDATE - #10/2021

Flu vaccination requirement

The Chief Health Officer of Queensland has, ordered that...

“A person must not enter, or remain on, the premises of a residential aged care facility in the State of Queensland if...after 3 May 2021, the person does not have an up to date vaccination against influenza, if the vaccination is available to that person.

Note: the vaccination is not available to a person only if:

- *the person has a medical contraindication to the influenza vaccine; or*
- *the person is observing the recommended waiting period between receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and the influenza vaccine.”*

(See clause 9.f. of Aged Care Direction No. 26)

Practicalities

This requirement to have a flu vaccination applies to staff and visitors. It does not apply to residents of aged care facilities.

The requirement will apply on and from Monday 3 May 2021. From that date, you will need to show us proof of your vaccination before you will be able to enter an aged care facility. The booking system has an option for uploading evidence of your vaccination, which will mean that you will only need to provide this evidence once. We will open up the booking system to allow for this before 3 May 2021.

Exemptions

The Chief Health Officer’s direction only gives two examples of why a vaccination is not available to a person.

- First - *“the vaccination is not available to a person with a medical contraindication to the influenza vaccine”*. If this applies to you, you will need to provide a doctor’s letter confirming the vaccination is not available to you.
- Second – *“the person is observing the recommended waiting period between receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and the influenza vaccine.”* If this applies to you, you will need to provide evidence of having received a COVID vaccination and still being within the waiting period for receiving the flu vaccination. The waiting period is two weeks for both the Astra-Zeneca vaccine and the Pfizer vaccine.

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Other exemptions

We are not able to grant exemptions for people who have conscientious objections or other reasons for not having the flu vaccination. You may apply to the Chief Health Officer for an exemption.

You can meet with residents outside

If you are not able to enter an aged care facility because you do not have the required flu vaccination, you will still be able to meet with the resident outside of the aged care facility. You can arrange this on the day, or better still, if you let us know in advance, we can arrange to have the resident escorted to meet with you. This is subject to residents being willing and able to leave the aged care facility - for example, the facility has not been ordered into a lockdown.

Lifting visitor restrictions

We expect to hear from the State Government later in the week about whether the current lockdown of aged care facilities will be lifted on Thursday 15 April, or extended for a further period. If the lockdown is lifted we will contact residents and representatives via email to let you know.

COVID Vaccination Update

I am pleased to advise that residents at all three of our aged care facilities who consented to the vaccine, have received the first dose of their COVID vaccinations. In addition, 62 staff members have also received their first dose, either through local GP clinics or through the in-service vaccination program.

We trust that this will increase confidence that our residents and staff are being protected against the virus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rohan Reid', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rohan Reid
CEO