

10 August 2020

Dear members of the Bethany Christian Care Family

COVID-19 UPDATE

Recommencing aged care visits and excursions

You may be aware that the Chief Health Officer has announced that visitors are once again allowed to enter aged care homes from 12:01pm today, Monday 10 August 2020, if aged care facilities are ready.

We are pleased that the situation in Queensland has allowed for the restrictions to be lifted and we welcome family and loved ones being able to visit residents and also take them on excursions.

As I am sure you appreciate, while the decision of the Chief Health Officer is not completely a surprise, the timing on when visits could be resumed was not clear right up until the announcement was made.

Therefore, from 9:00 am Wednesday, 12 August 2020, we will recommence visits and excursions, subject to the same conditions that existed before the most recent lock-down came into effect. This will allow us time to put the appropriate staffing and systems in place to ensure that visits and excursions can occur as smoothly and safely as possible.

Practical considerations

Visits and excursions will need to be booked through the online booking system available through our website. Please remember to:

- 1. Book at least 24 hours in advance using the online booking system.** Please use the booking system on our website to book visits or excursions. If you do not have access to the internet, perhaps a family member or friend could assist you (or at The Plains you can use the tablet that is now available in the reception area to make your booking). If these options are not available to you, our staff can make or change a booking for you. Please call Head Office (3737 5080) for assistance with booking.
- 2. Arrive 5-10 minutes before your booked time, on the day you have booked.** Arriving a few minutes early will enable you to complete the sign-in process before being escorted into the aged care facility with other visitors who are booked for that time.

Bethany Christian Care is a not-for-profit organisation. To benefit our residents:

- Donations are tax deductible
- Our investment fund is exempt from the Centrelink/ Veterans' Affairs deeming provisions
- We are thankful for bequests.

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"Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

3. **Provide evidence of a current influenza vaccination if you are entering aged care.** It is a Queensland Government legal requirement that everyone who enters an aged care facility must provide evidence of a current influenza vaccination or medical exemption. Exemptions are not available based on conscientious, religious, or cultural objections to the influenza vaccination.
4. **Be patient and treat our staff with respect and courtesy.** Each visit or excursion is important to the resident, friends and families involved. However, it may take time to go through the required screening processes, and you may have to wait while staff attend to other residents, visitors, or tasks. Our lovely administration and care staff are trying to help.

We want everyone’s experience of visits and excursions to be as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Our staff always seek to help people who are wanting to have a visit or excursion. However, to avoid a situation where you would need to be (regretfully!) turned away, please remember the requirements listed above.

Additional protective measures

While we welcome visitors, we ask that you consider limiting your face-to-face visits to say once or twice a week and combine this with virtual visiting. This will help to reduce the number of visitors coming on site and the potential for exposure.

Also, if you will be visiting other aged care facilities, we ask that you do not visit one of our aged care facilities. This will help to reduce cross infection within the aged care sector. These measures are already in place for our staff who now only work at one aged care facility.

Long weekend arrangements

This weekend is a long weekend, with a public holiday this Friday 14 August 2020. Over the long weekend we will have limited visits and excursions available as follows.

Friday 14 August	Limited visits and excursions
Saturday 15 August	Limited excursions only
Sunday 16 August	Limited excursions only

In the week commencing Monday 17 August 2020, we will return to visits and excursions Monday through Saturday (morning) and limited excursions only on Sunday mornings.

Changeable situation

Our processes for visiting and excursions are in line with the *Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes During COVID-19* (the “Code”). The Code provides that operators

of aged care facilities can implement stricter visiting arrangements to respond to changes in local conditions.

As we have seen with the COVID situation in Victoria things can change very quickly.

While in Queensland we are presently fortunate to be a situation where aged care facility visits and excursions can recommence, please remember that if the COVID situation in Queensland deteriorates we will need to implement tighter visiting and excursion arrangements. In such a situation, tighter arrangements may need to be implemented very quickly and booked visits and excursions may need to be cancelled at short notice.

Conclusion

Again, I note that at this time there are no known COVID infections among our residents or staff.

The welfare, health and safety of our residents and staff is our top priority. At all times, our decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic seek to faithfully achieve that priority. If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this issue further, please contact Bethany Christian Care Head Office (07 3737 5080; bethany@bethanycc.org.au).

I am thankful for your continued prayers for all the Bethany Christian Care Family.

Kind regards,



Rohan Reid
CEO