



Vacenti Update on Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Update no 6
Information from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Residents, Families and Friends,

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this unprecedented time. Since our last announcement - Update no 5 on 24th March 2020, there has been changes to both Government directives and Vacenti's internal policy.

Please ensure that you read this document to the end as it outlines significant changes to both visitors' and residents' restrictions.

The Queensland Government's Chief Health Officer has taken actions to restrict contact between residents and non-residents of a residential aged care facility. According to their directions, a person must not enter, or remain on, the premises of a residential aged care facility in the State of Queensland unless:

- a) The person is an employee or contractor of the residential aged care facility; or
- b) The person's presence at the premises is for the purposes of providing goods or services that are necessary for the effective operation of the residential aged care facility; or
- c) the person's presence at the premises is for the purposes of providing health, medical or pharmaceutical services to a resident of the residential aged care facility; or
- d) the person's presence at the premises is for the purposes of a **care and support visit**¹ to a resident of the residential aged care facility on a particular day, and is the only care and support visit made to the resident on that day; or
- e) the person's presence at the premises is for the purposes of end-of-life support for a resident of the residential aged care facility; or
- f) the person's presence at the premises is required for the purposes of emergency management or law enforcement; or
- g) the person's presence at the premises is in the person's capacity as a prospective resident of the residential aged care facility.

¹**Care and support visit** means a visit of no longer than 2 hours made to the resident by one person, or two persons together, for the purposes of providing care and support to the resident.

Despite the restrictions noted above any person (staff, visitor or contractor) must not enter or remain on the premises of a residential aged care facility in the State of Queensland if:

- a. during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, the person arrived in Australia from a place outside Australia; or
- b. during the 14 days immediately preceding the entry, the person had known contact with a person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19; or
- c. the person has a temperature equal to or higher than 37.5 degrees or symptoms of acute respiratory infection; or

The Chief Medical Officer has also advised that a residential aged care facility must not permit a resident, excluding an end-of-life resident, to leave the facility except to receive, or access, health care or in the case of emergency.

To ensure Vacenti complies with the above restriction and address the increasing threat to older Australians, we have had to reassess our internal processes for visitors. This is to ensure that we are protecting our residents, our staff and our visitors.

Effective Tuesday 31st March 2020:

- **Vacenti will be restricting visitor access during business hours only for all facilities (Monday – Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm).**
- **According to Government requirements, a resident may only have 1 care and support visit per day**
- **The care and support visit is no longer than 2 hours.**

This will mean much less access to your loved one and we regret having to take position but we are bound by regulations. Please make sure you, as a family, communicate with each other as to your visit intentions and plan as best you can as none of us want to be in a position where we are turning people away at the front door.

Visit outside of these hours will only be granted under the following circumstances:

- for the purposes of end of life support for a resident; or
- persons who provide significant assistance in providing care for residents.

Our Facility Managers have not been given any latitude for special considerations. Please make use of our new Telehealth Skype access for video calling your loved one. The addresses were provided in the last update. We will provide full details of the booking process by Tuesday 1st April at the latest.

I am also aware that the Local Government elections are held this Saturday 28th March 2020. Could I please request that any persons attending the voting centres on Saturday please refrain from subsequently visiting our homes due to the increase risk of COVID-19. If you intend to vote please do so after visiting our homes.

Today we have also received some clarification on the influenza vaccination requirements by 1st May. Extracts of that advice are:

“Specifically, the requirements set out that individuals must not enter or remain on the premises of a residential aged care facility if the person does not have an up-to-date (i.e. 2020) vaccination against influenza, if such a vaccination is available to the person.

Aged care providers are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person does not enter or remain on the premises if they do not meet the influenza vaccination (and other) requirements set out in the relevant state and territory directions. This applies to staff, visitors, health practitioners, volunteers and others.

Approved providers may need to seek appropriate evidence of immunisation status from individuals seeking to enter the service. Appropriate evidence may be a statement or record from a health practitioner; or an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.”

I also reinforce our requirements in the last update of signing in, social distancing, hand washing / sanitising and remaining in your loved one’s room or external areas. We all play an important role in keeping our loved ones safe.

I understand these are difficult times and the above measure have may restrict access to your loved ones. However, we believe these measures ensure we have the best chance of preventing an outbreak of COVID-19 and protecting our residents, our staff and our visitors.

Link to Queensland Health Chief Health Officer - Aged care facilities Direction

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/aged-care>

Yours Sincerely

Julian Casagrande
Chief Executive Officer



Residential Aged Care & Premium Senior Living

Phone: (07) 3422 9300 **Direct:** (07) 3422 9325 **Mobile:** 0409 576 225

Email: Julian@casagrande.id.au

Address: 1 / 2000 Logan Road Upper Mt Gravatt QLD 4122

Web: <http://www.vacenti.com.au/>

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