



Vacenti Update on Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Update no 18

Information as at Tuesday 28th July 2020

Good afternoon

A quick catch-up. The current position in Victoria is a very sobering reminder as to the virulent nature of COVID-19 and how quickly it can spread when we relax on our hand washing and social distancing. We implore everyone to be very mindful of who you meet up with, how you meet, social distancing and everything we already know.

Aged Care Direction No 7

Aged Care Direction No 7 was released on the 10th July. There was very little change in there from Aged Care Direction No 6.

Taking residents off site

We have received a number of questions about residents leaving the homes for an outing. The Qld Chief Health Officer in Aged Care Direction No 7 states:

"The operator of a residential aged care facility in the State of Queensland may permit a resident to leave the facility, including to receive end of life or palliative care, receive or access health care, attend small family gatherings, undertake exercise, or attend a funeral"

Outings to public areas (shopping centres, sporting clubs, etc) is not in the spirit of Aged Care Direction no 7. Vacenti endorses small private outings for your loved one for emotional support. However, we again ask both residents and families to strongly consider where you go, for what reason and what public exposure is involved. Please don't be offended if our home's management ask questions and offer alternative suggestions to an outing. They have a responsibility for the safety of every resident, family and staff member on site.

As previously advised, both the Commonwealth and Qld Departments of Health require us to undertake a proactive risk assessment on each outing before residents leave the site and on return. What we need to know is:

1. the location of the outing, to assist with contact tracing should it be needed;
2. the type of venue you are going to;
3. the size of the gathering;

and discuss any additional precautions that you may need to take.

We **require** all residents and families to complete the Resident Leave Register at reception, both on exiting and return to assist us in our risk assessment and surveillance protocols. Sign out is particularly important for contact tracing. Be very vigilant about social distancing and personal hygiene whilst you are off site.

Steps Vacenti takes for possible COVID -19 infections from staff

In light of the current experience in Victoria, where a number of COVID cases in aged care homes are related to staff introduction, we can assure you that Vacenti is doing "everything we can" to limit the risk of staff bringing a COVID case into our homes, but neither we, nor our staff can guarantee it won't occur. Our COVID-19 Committee meets almost every day, and formally on a weekly basis to

discuss current measures in place and efficacy. Prevention of staff bringing in COVID-19 has three primary aspects, namely:

- 1) **Daily review of the active COVID cases in the Brisbane metropolitan** area to determine the level of community spread and our risk profile. The level of community spread has an impact on likelihood a staff member will contract a case of COVID. As at today there is no community spread of COVID in Brisbane. Naturally, our response will change considerably should Brisbane start to see cases of community spread.
- 2) **Continual staff education and reminders** as the evidence to-date is that people, including staff, can be infectious without, or prior to symptoms showing. Our education program is frequent, and quite varied in its content and delivery but is essentially centred around staff being very careful, and ongoing vigilance about social distancing, personal hygiene, family scenarios and activities undertaken when not at work.
- 3) Vacenti has **strict policies about staff attending work whilst ill**. All staff are temperature tested at sign in and screening questions responded to as part of the sign in process. All staff are required to be tested for COVID-19 if they show any of the published Qld Health symptoms and are not allowed to return to work until the results have been provided. Staff holiday travel is monitored and staff are required to undertake mandatory isolation per Qld Health guidelines should they travel interstate. At Shared Services we have ongoing daily monitoring and reporting of both residents and staff reporting ill to analyse trends for early detection of something brewing.

I hope this provides a level of confidence that appropriate, and all available prevention steps are being taken in this aspect.

Visiting Hours

Vacenti homes remain open for visits Monday to Saturday during normal hours of 8:30am to 4:30pm. Residents may have an unlimited number of visits in a day, but no more than 2 people at a time.

Sunday and after-hours visits will continue to be by appointment only.

We respectfully ask visiting families to:

- Not visit if you are feeling ill, have a temperature greater than 37.5C or visited a declared COVID - 19 hotspot;
- Keep your visit to the resident's rooms or outdoor areas. Visits cannot be undertaken in communal areas.
- Follow the directions of staff.

Electronic Sign-in

Vacenti is very cognizant of some of the challenges of the electronic-sign in process and temperature testing, both through very direct feedback and through the survey. As with most COVID actions across the country, the system was put in with a level of speed, both to meet Dept of Health screening expectations and to minimise risk. We have been in discussion with the provider to make the process as streamlined as possible. In the meantime, we ask that you:

- Be patient and respectful of others who may be waiting as well
- Keep up your social distancing should you be waiting to sign in

- Seek assistance from our Admin staff should you have any difficulties at all.

Be assured we are doing everything we can everyday to manage the COVID-19 position.

COVID-19 Survey

Earlier this month we sent out a 9 question survey seeking your views as to how well Vacenti has handled the COVID-19 pandemic so far. We really appreciated the 324 responses received. Data and comments have been reviewed on a site-by-site basis and strategies adjusted as required. Site specific analysis is now showing on the TV screens in the home's reception area. For interest, the group wide results follow.



