



Friday, 22 May 2020

Greetings,

I write at this time to provide an update on the changing nature of the current Covid-19 Pandemic and State of Emergency social distancing and health service changes.

With the State of Emergency due to expire next week, the recent testing blitz and the state premier Daniel Andrews working on a pathway to reduce social distancing measures, we write to advise on changes that will be coming into effect here at CDH from Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2020.

Whilst we acknowledge that not everyone and every resident is completely comfortable in returning things to how they were, we do recognise that throughout the last two months, our residents, staff and visitors have done a tremendous job in working with us to protect the risk of transmission to our residents. We truly thank you for your effort and sacrifice over this time.

In enhancing visiting times from next week, we encourage you to continue using the principles of hand hygiene, social distancing and staying away if unwell as the minimum standard to help keep the curve where it is and reduce transmission.

In line with recommendations across all other Loddon Mallee Health services, as of Monday next week, we will be increasing visiting times in Residential Aged Care to the following, 7 days a week:

**Cohuna District Hospital has increased their visiting hours for all residential aged care residents to up to one hour every day between the hours of 10:00am to 5:30pm.**

To do this though, we will need your support in applying some additional protective equipment as part of this. A mask and apron must be worn by the visitor if they are visiting for longer than 15 minutes. Our service will provide these upon scanning, and you are welcome to take the mask and re-use it. This mask not only aids in protecting you, but also helps stop airborne transmission. It means we can have you visit for longer without increasing any risks to your loved one, staff and other residents.

**As per previous correspondence, the current restrictions will still apply:**

- Visits should be limited to 1-2 people at a time
- Visitors must still ring and book the designated room please
- Current regulations remain unchanged around social distancing as they do in the community



- No entry without providing evidence of an influenza vaccination
- No children under the age of 16 permitted
- All visitors will be screened at the door before entry by our nursing staff, this also involved the taking of temperatures via the handheld scanner.
- Please do not visit if you are unwell, you will not be permitted to enter if you have a temperature or appear unwell, even with a recent negative Covid-19 test.

Our hope is that over the coming month we can relax restrictions further, but until this is approved by Government health authorities, the enhanced visiting times and length is the best we can afford whilst still reducing the risks. Please be advised that if a positive Covid 19 case is confirmed in relation to our staff or residents, these guidelines will no longer be applicable.

In line with this, we have also adopted the attached Code of Conduct that was endorsed by the Aged Care minister for release this week. It sets out minimum standards expected of an organisation as well as a resident and their visitors and will also help you understand further why they easing of restrictions in residential services may be a longer process than what you are seeing out in the general community.

As always, we appreciate your help, support and also feedback during this time and look forward to enhancing access further into areas of volunteerism and younger members of the community into the near future. For now, please feel free to discuss with site management if you have any concerns with this or feedback on how we can better enable you to stay in touch with your loved ones.

Regards

*Ben Maw*  
Chief Executive Officer

Cohuna District Hospital  
*Committed to Excellence in Rural Healthcare*  
Ph: 54 565305  
Mob: 0427097221  
Fax: 54 562435