

19 June 2020

Dear members of the Bethany Christian Care Family

COVID-19 UPDATE

Changes to aged care visiting and outing arrangements

As I outlined in my letter yesterday, the latest Aged Care Direction (sixth version) loosens some of the restrictions for visiting and leaving aged care facilities.

I know this is exciting news for many residents and their loved ones, so I am pleased to provide this further update, to outline how we will implement these changes.

The pandemic situation has greatly improved in Queensland and the risks associated with visiting residents in aged care or residents leaving the facility are much lower. However, these risks do still exist and may change in the future. In these new procedures, we are aiming to provide choice and flexibility for residents and families, while still managing ongoing risks to the safety and wellbeing of our residents and staff.

Visiting residents in an aged care facility

What is changing

The booking system is being simplified. When booking a visit, you will need to provide the resident's name, however you will not need to know the resident's house name or room number to make a booking.

The length of a visit is no longer limited to 2 hours; however, you will need to indicate how long you expect to stay when you book. A resident will also be able to have more than one visit each day. Children under the age of 16 years are now able to visit aged care residents.

During a visit, visitors can visit a resident in their room or in outdoor areas (provided you are social distancing from other residents). This now includes outdoor areas of the retirement village, as well as the aged care facility.

What has not changed

There is still a limit of two visitors at a time for each resident. Family and friends will need to coordinate their visits, so that there are no more than two visitors at a time.

Everyone entering aged care is still required to provide evidence of a current influenza vaccination (or a medical exemption).

Visits continue to be available on the hour between 9am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. A limited number of visits can be booked for each time slot, so that we can manage the number of visitors on site at a time. Visits need to be booked at least one day in advance through the electronic booking system, or by calling the Administration Office of the facility.

Aged care residents leaving the facility

Residents may now leave their residential aged care facility, for day or overnight outings.

These outings need to be booked at least one day in advance through the online booking system, or by contacting the Administration Office at the facility.

When making a booking you will be asked to provide details of the outing and complete screening questions. If a visitor will be entering the aged care facility to escort a resident for an outing, the visitor will also need to provide evidence of a current influenza vaccine (or medical exemption).

Before leaving for an outing the resident, or the family or close friend escorting them, must first come to the reception to confirm their departure.

A resident outing can be booked between 9am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. The resident can return to the facility after hours or over the weekend, if this is indicated in the booking for the outing.

When will the changes take effect?

These changes will take effect from Monday 22 June.

The updated booking system will be available by the afternoon of Saturday 20 June on our website: <http://www.bethanycc.org.au/links/visiting.aspx>.

Conclusion

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