

23 April 2020

Dear members of the Bethany Christian Care Family

### COVID-19 UPDATE

Further to my letter yesterday, we have continued to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation.

It is fair to say that the feedback to my letter yesterday has been mixed, with many residents and families congratulating us on the stance we have taken, while others have been very critical. I believe that this reflects the diverse range of opinions in the community on this issue.

In our decision making processes we have of course tried to consider the opinions of our residents and relatives, however, the overriding factors have been to safeguard the health and well-being of our residents and staff and to comply with all legally binding requirements as set out by the Federal and State Governments. We believe that to date that we have been successful in doing this.

However, since my letter, the Commissioner of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has now provided advice about how the Commission views the issue of visitors to aged care facilities.

The Commissioner stated that:

*"The Prime Minister's statement on 21 April, supported by the Chief Medical Officer Dr Brendan Murphy, has clarified that in the evolving context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with growing evidence of low and reducing rates of community transmission and outbreaks, it is not reasonable for aged care residents who rely on family visits to be denied physical access to their families."*

In response to the Commissioner's advice we have updated our policy and will be **allowing visitors** into our aged care facilities.

**When will visiting recommence?**

From Friday 1 May 2020.

Allowing visitation from this date aligns with the Government's direction for everyone entering an aged care facility to have an influenza vaccination. This will help to protect our residents against the risk of an influenza outbreak.

**Will there be limitations and conditions on visiting?**

Yes. Just as there were limitations before we introduced a complete lockdown, there will be limitations and conditions when visiting recommences. We expect that there will be some new limitations and conditions to reflect the evolving situation. We will send you further advice about these next week. These limitations and conditions are all about protecting our residents and staff from COVID-19.

Thank you for your understanding and support during this time, as we continue to implement changes in response to the fluid COVID-19 situation.

We will continue to keep you updated on any further changes as they occur. If you would like to receive these updates via email, and are not doing so already, please let us know.

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](mailto:bethany@bethanycc.org.au)).

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

Kind regards,



Rohan Reid  
CEO