



18 May 2020

Coronavirus Update #14

Greetings from the CEO

This is one piece of information we will never tire of - that to date no residents or staff have tested positive to Coronavirus within Maroba. Yes and while we are all thinking, 'what a relief', we cannot afford to be complacent, especially as there are now more venues and activities opening up within our region.

One thing is very clear, that whilst known cases of Coronavirus are at very low levels within our state, the risk of transmission remains high if strict protocols for social distancing are put to one side for the sake of rebuilding the Nation's economy. Like any other citizen, Healthcare workers are at risk of contracting this virus if individuals become careless. Therefore, I urge you to remain vigilant with handwashing, not the way we see the politicians demonstrate on TV, but the way the Health authorities' advise. Do not go out if you are unwell other than to see your Health care professional. Use advised cough and sneeze etiquette, don't touch surfaces unless you must and keep sanitiser and wipes with you to self-manage your own hygiene and surfaces you may need to touch.


Everything the community does to follow good hygiene and prevention protocols works towards protecting our healthcare workers. You may not be aware that the supermarkets have ceased offering special shopping times for Healthcare workers and Seniors which means our risk is further increased. So when you do shop, keep your distance from others to protect them and YOU. Also as public transport gets busier, remember your precautions will protect fellow travellers and some of them will be healthcare workers.

The precautions Maroba has in place are still very necessary. As we continue to engage with Health Services and other Aged Care services in the region, the message remains very clear – it is not a matter of IF but WHEN our region will be required to respond to a second wave of the Pandemic. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) remains problematic across the state and many items are on back order, which is why we must be so careful in how we manage our supplies of these items. Some people have suggested that we just put all the visitors in PPE and let them in to visit. Unfortunately, we would then be left with not enough for our regular usage and indeed, not enough to even manage 3 days in the event of escalating from Green to Red in our Pandemic Plan.

Staff remain vigilant in reporting symptoms and being tested for Covid -19 and Influenza, as on every shift they must meet set criteria to be able to work. Residents continue to be assessed every day, which will be on going for some time, especially as we are in Flu season. All relevant data is being reported daily to the Public Health Unit as part of our monitoring obligations.

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As you know, we have been road testing window visits, which, for the most part went reasonably well. However, we know in some instances people felt the time was too short. The reason for our choice of timing was to get as many people as possible to the windows within our 2-person limit. So thank you for bearing with us. This week those visits will be extended to 30 minutes, allowing for temperature checks, sign in and chair cleaning. Also, as the weather is getting colder, please come rugged up as we continue to work towards our next solution.

We do understand that a small number of people are genuinely not able to attend during the timeframes offered, so you may need to call reception to arrange an alternative option. Direct care and social engagement remain a priority for all our residents and while we will do all we can to support your situation, please be patient as our resources are limited.

We will also continue to provide telecommunication support, as a number of residents have been very clear that they do not want to have visitors at this time. Again it is a balancing act to manage the resourcing of all the strategies we are putting in place.

We have ordered large Perspex screens to allow us to move indoors to the entrance foyers of the Manor and the Lodge and we remain optimistic that they will arrive in time for next week's visiting program.

Please let me remind you about vaccination. If you are able to get vaccinated, do it sooner rather than later as you never know when you will be called into the facility for a room visit. These are not my rules but Public Health orders.

We must all do our bit to reduce risk to your loved ones. Co-operation is critical to our success in relaxing the visiting restrictions, not just in the community, but here at Maroba. I was very disappointed to learn that even after several requests to only deliver non-perishable items during office hours, that on Mother's Day, there were at least 60 separate deliveries. This certainly did impact the care flow for our Registered Nurse on duty which was a very undesirable situation for our residents.

We are doing our best to relax our visiting protocols and have asked visitors to follow specific instructions to protect their loved one during these visits. In some cases, these instructions have been ignored and this of course, raises grave concerns for achievement of our ongoing protection strategy. We understand that you want to hug your loved one, as it is our natural human response. However, at present for the safety of all residents, it is this close contact that we are diligently trying to avoid.

Whilst you may be hearing that risk of infection is currently low, we can assure you, that the outcome of a Covid-19 infection within an Aged Care Facility, will be catastrophic. Co-operation from the entire Maroba Team and every family member associated with Maroba will be key to the success of our ongoing prevention strategy. NO, I cannot guarantee we will not experience a Covid-19 infection but I will guarantee I will do everything within my power and my means to prevent it.

I want to thank all those residents and families who have been so patient in these very testing times and who continue to send their messages of support and encouragement to our team.

It is National Volunteers week and we want to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers who have stepped up to the Covid-19 challenge, as well as all those who have had to take a seat on the bench while we cross to the other side. Their service is always spectacular and we look forward to a celebration of that service at some time down the track.

Speaking of Volunteers, our bus drivers will be back on deck next week to start socially distanced bus outings again. Already we have a full program of 4 outings a day for 5 days. Our residents are looking forward to these outings from within the warmth of the bus, as it now getting too cold for their outside walks!

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Viv Allanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V".

Viv Allanson
CEO, Maroba