



22 June 2020

## **Coronavirus Update #16**

### **Greetings from Maroba COVID-19 Headquarters**

This is the moment we have all been waiting for! The Australian Government – Department of Health released a new update late on Friday evening on Visitor Restrictions in Aged Care.

While there is good news, there remains tight protocols and screening procedures in place for the protection of residents. Significantly all visitors must continue to provide proof of the 2020 influenza vaccination in order to minimise the risk of introducing or spreading Covid-19 in our facility.

These changes start **from 23/6/2020...**

#### **Key changes to the recommended advice on visitor restrictions include:**

- children of all ages be permitted to enter RACFs — all visitors, including children, must adhere to restrictions on visitor numbers, social distancing and personal hygiene
- visiting service providers such as hairdressers, diversional therapists and allied health professionals be permitted to enter RACFs when their services cannot be provided via telehealth or other adaptive models of care, and the resident cannot attend an external facility to receive these services;
- spouses or other close relatives or social supports are not limited in the number of hours that they spend with their spouse/relative

#### **Measures to reduce the risk of transmission to residents, including:**

- limiting visits to a maximum of two visitors at any one time per resident
- visits should be conducted in a resident's room, outdoors, or a specified area in the RACF, rather than communal areas with other residents
- no large group visits should be permitted at this time, however gatherings of residents in communal or outdoor areas which adhere to social distancing and current jurisdictional requirements for gathering size may be permitted

Visitors must practise social distancing where possible, including maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres. Visitors have a responsibility to supervise any children with them, practise hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and to comply with directions given by Maroba staff.

Please note Room visitation does not include stopping in any communal area for coffee or catching up with any other residents or visitors. You are required to go directly to your loved one's room and remain there for the duration of the visit. Please keep in mind meal times and be sensitive to stepping outside the room if care interventions are required. You will be directed by staff to an appropriate waiting area during these care interventions.

When visiting you will notice signage about social distancing, hand hygiene and health etiquette so please make yourself familiar with this information and co-operate with it.



I urge each family to communicate amongst yourselves to avoid queues of people arriving at the same time to see the same resident. Remember the procedure explicitly states that **No More than 2 people per resident** will be possible at the same time.

These measures will enable us to provide the best possible protection for all of our residents during this Pandemic. Nationwide reports seem to indicate that we still have a long way to go before we can have any confidence that our community is completely safe.

### **Restrictions on entry into Aged Care Facilities remain in place:**

The following visitors and staff (including visiting workers) should not be permitted to enter an Aged Care Facility:

- Individuals who have returned from overseas in the last 14 days.
- Individuals who have been in close contact with a confirmed case within the last 14 days.
- Individuals who are unwell, particularly those with fever or acute respiratory infection (for example, cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath) symptoms.
- Individuals who have not been vaccinated against influenza.

All current screening protocols will continue and you will not be required to make an appointment within the set visiting hours of Monday to Friday 10am to 4:30pm. However, all visitors must **exit the building before 5pm** as the doors will be locked and reception will not be staffed to assist your exit.

If you are working, we will, by appointment, facilitate visitation outside these hours. Due to the ongoing screening protocols, visiting outside of set hours will place an additional demand on staff. Whilst staff remain eager to meet your requests, we do ask for your continued patience as they endeavour to get residents ready to leave their care areas to attend screening protocols.

### **External excursions**

It is recommended that external excursions for groups of residents not be permitted. However, Maroba is conducting physically distanced bus trips, which have been successful to date as no one is getting out of the vehicle other than the staff to get “hot apple pies”.

Individuals and family members (close friends, partners, couples or siblings/familial groups in Maroba) should be permitted to leave the Facility to attend **small** family gatherings.

The size of the family gathering should be in line with current jurisdictional advice and physical distancing and hygiene measures should be adhered to during the visit.

Maroba requires you to complete a risk assessment for each external visit at least 48 hrs prior to the excursion, taking into account the local epidemiology, number of people attending and the feasibility of physical distancing. To assist you the appropriate form is

attached, will be available on the website or upon request to reception. A copy of your completed risk assessment which must include the location of the visit, number of people in the gathering and the date of visit must be handed to reception for review prior to proceeding with the excursion. This will enable tracing by the Public Health unit if required.

It is further recommended that in the event a facility needs to return to a higher level of protection (for example, an outbreak of COVID-19 or local cluster in the community), facilities should cease all external excursions. Maroba reserves the right to place further restrictions on visitation in the event of any infectious outbreak.

#### **External Appointments:**

I hope that many of our Health Professionals will recommence visiting Maroba. However for those who need to attend Healthcare visits we continue with our current arrangements as they have worked very well. When making such arrangements please request the first appointment of the day, refrain from using the waiting room if at all possible, maintain social distancing and exercise appropriate hand hygiene.

#### **Bringing in Non Perishable Items:**

There will be a sanitation station available for you to wipe over all items you intend to leave with your loved one. If you wish to bring perishable food items please review the attached Food Safety Tips to avoid disappointment.

We have all been looking forward to lifting current restrictions and even though visiting isn't back to normal I want to take this opportunity to say ... **'Welcome Back'** ...we have missed you and we know our residents have too.



Kind regards



Viv Allanson, CEO Maroba