

24 July 2020

Dear Mercy Place Keon Park staff, residents and families

This afternoon we were notified by a team member that they have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Based on the timeframes when the team member showed symptoms and tested positive, we have checked with Mercy Health's infectious diseases physician, Dr David Turner, and we are confident that the staff member has not worked recently enough to have been in close contact with any staff or residents during while they were infectious.

Nevertheless, we have notified the Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria) Public Health Unit and they are in agreement that a full outbreak response is not required, however we are nevertheless proceeding to increase our precautions until we have confirmation from the Commonwealth Department of Health that no further action is required.

Over the weekend we will be even more vigilant with our cleaning regime around the home. I am aware that we have also put in place further visitor restrictions this week due to the advice we have received about the broader risk of community infection, based on our location within a local government area with high levels of community-based transmission. While this measure also reduces our risk of any exposure to the virus from outside the home, the two events are unrelated.

Over the weekend, we will also increase observations of residents — again as an extreme precaution. We can do these things without disrupting the home and in the hope that they will give you a greater sense of comfort that we would always leave nothing to chance in our approach to care, health and safety.

We are fortunate to be in a situation where we know that contact with others in the home has been avoided. I am extremely grateful to our team member for letting us know and for isolating as soon as the test results were known. I am enormously proud of the actions of our team member and we look forward to their safe and speedy recovery.

This afternoon, I have spoken with staff from our morning shift and staff on duty, to let them know about the situation and to reassure them of their safety. I hope that this further confirmation from the Public Health Unit late this afternoon gives everyone maximum reassurance.

We will let you know immediately if the Commonwealth requires us to adopt any further measures, though this would seem unlikely given the extremely low risk.

By chance I had volunteered our home to participate in a program of testing for coronavirus being offered by the Commonwealth Department of Health in areas with high levels of infection. This will also take place in the next fortnight and is another way that we are trying to detect any possible infection early and give everyone in our home some reassurance during this very worrying time.

While this update should be good news for us all it does emphasise the very real levels of risk in our local community. I want you to know that we take this risk very seriously and we will remain vigilant to protect everyone in our home.

As always, we encourage you to get in touch if you have any concerns. Given the additional requests we are making of staff working weekend shifts, can I ask that you call us between 10am–12pm and 1.30–3.45pm unless the matter is urgent.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Kind regards,



Christopher Blackman
Service Manager
Mercy Place Keon Park