Monday 23 November, 2020

Dear residents, families and friends,

Our last letter to you dated Monday 9 November indicated that we would reassess our surgical masks policy position on Tuesday 1 December.

With Christmas fast approaching, we have brought this communication forward to provide you with information that outlines our guidelines for ensuring a safe and happy Christmas for all our residents, families and staff.

BaptistCare has reviewed the current Public Health advice for NSW and ACT and will continue to review these guidelines should there be any changes.

**We ask that all families and visitors please review the following guidelines and requests:**

1. **Pre-Christmas celebrations**
   o Resident Christmas parties will proceed but unfortunately, families will be unable to attend in person this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Each home will review the options for including family and friends via multimedia channels and will be notified of the details.

2. **Christmas related excursions**
   o Residents will continue to have the option of leaving the home for an excursion in line with the existing risk assessment approach. Please place all leave requests to your Care Team Manager or Residential Manager with at least 2 business days' notice to allow for this risk assessment to be completed. The Manager will then consider any of the identified risks and help you to include the necessary actions needed to minimise these risks and ensure a safe outing and return for your loved one.

3. **Christmas Day celebrations**
   o The standard weekday visiting times will continue between 10:30 am and 5:00 pm.
   o Christmas Day lunch is available to families for $25/per head and requires booking with the home. Further instructions will be provided by each home closer to the date.
   o Residents with visitors for Christmas lunch will share the meal in the resident's bedroom and or, an alternate private location selected by the home. The maximum of visitors permitted is 2 per resident, as per the current Public Health Order.
   o Presents are allowed and encouraged!

**The requirements for the use of surgical masks remains unchanged and is as follows:**

- o **All VISITORS and STAFF of a BaptistCare aged care home within the Sydney Region** are to continue the use of surgical masks when visiting or working within a home. **This includes; The Gracewood, Aminya, Dorothy Henderson Lodge, Shalom, Cooinda (Macquarie Park), Warena and Morven Gardens (Blue Mountains).**

- o **For all VISITORS and STAFF of an aged care home outside of the Sydney Region**, the use of a surgical mask is optional. NSW Health has advised that masks are not generally required, but we are making masks available for staff and visitors who would like to continue to use them to provide an added level of protection to the frail and vulnerable residents we look after.

4. Our screening processes upon entry will continue to include checking whether a visitor meets any of the exclusion criteria and/or mandatory masking criteria, as advised by the Chief Health Officer and NSW or ACT Health.

5. The entry requirements concerning all visitors requiring a Flu vaccination will continue to remain in place, along with a maximum of two visitors per resident at any given time still applies, as outlined in the Public Health Order.

6. **Please be aware of the instructions at your local BaptistCare Home,** to ensure you are following all COVID Safe Practices.

BaptistCare will review this policy again on Friday 18 December.

We continue to review our policy guidelines in response to the advice issued by NSW/ACT Health. We will communicate any changes to you as soon as possible. This may mean that notifications and advice from time to time may be sent out with short notice and may also involve some differences between homes, based on the local situation.

We thank you again for your support as we continue to manage the ongoing situation. We want to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to protect you and your loved ones during this time.

**Allan Waters**
General Manager – Residential Services