COVID-19: Guide for aged care facilities

## There is a range of COVID-related information and resources available to aged care facilities, particularly via the Australian and Tasmanian governments.

## The purpose of this fact sheet is to highlight some key materials we think are of particular relevance to aged care facilities, and alert you to some additional Primary Health Tasmania tools and tips.

## Engaging with general practice

### Primary Health Tasmania has developed the following resources to help you engage with general practice.

* Primary Health Tasmania are collecting information from GPs to share with you. This includes preferred method of contact and contact details and their capacity to assess and manage COVID-19 positive patients.
* When we provide this information to you, we will include instructions on how to set up an email distribution list to ensure your visiting GPs are kept up to date.
* Template letters that you might like to adapt and use for corresponding with GPs:
  + the first relates to sharing information about the facility’s outbreak planning and preparedness
  + the second relates to communicating with general practice in the event of an outbreak at your facility.
* Three outbreak scenarios to assist with testing your Outbreak Management Plan (see below).
* A poster based on the first 30 minutes of the Australian Government’s *First 24 hours – managing COVID-19 in a RACF* resource. It is intended as a ready reference for facility staff who may be the first responder to a resident who has symptoms or a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis. Staff can be familiarised with this poster as part of Emergency Decision Guidelines training (see below).

We have also prepared a similar fact sheet for GPs about working with aged care facilities on pandemic preparedness and response. It includes some of the same information as this guide, including telehealth information and scenarios.

## Other preparedness considerations

### Ensure your aged care facility is telehealth-ready

* Access our ‘Telehealth tips and tricks’ webinar recording at [bit.ly/2DpqmJc](file:///C:\Users\jdenholm\Downloads\bit.ly\2DpqmJc).
* Visit [www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/for-health-professionals/novel-coronavirus-response/](https://www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/for-health-professionals/novel-coronavirus-response/) and follow the instructions for the healthdirect Video Call pilot if you would like to set up the Video Call platform in your facility. The Video Call platform can be used on mobile phones, tablets and PCs with webcams and a microphone.
* Contact Primary Health Tasmania via [providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au](mailto:providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au) if you would like to understand more about what’s involved in the Video Call platform.

### Emergency Decision Guidelines, Yellow Envelope, ISOBAR

* Primary Health Tasmania is currently funding training in residential aged care facilities in the use of our Emergency Decision Guidelines, Isobar and Yellow Envelope tools.
* The Emergency Decision Guidelines provide information on the identification, assessment and management of an acutely unwell or deteriorating resident.
* ISOBAR provides an internationally recognised method of communicating with all healthcare professionals.
* The Yellow Envelope helps improve the transfer of patient information between care settings
* Training for your facility can be organised by emailing [admin@medecslearning.com](mailto:admin@medecslearning.com)
* Copies of the Emergency Decision Guidelines, the Yellow Envelope or ISOBAR lanyards can be ordered by emailing [providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au](mailto:providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au)

## Tasmanian HealthPathways

* As part of the ongoing COVID-19 response, Tasmanian HealthPathways has developed a suite of COVID-specific Pathways, to be updated on a regular basis. These Pathways are where local health professionals are encouraged to go if they want to get accurate, localised information about navigating care during the coronavirus response period, tailored to a variety of contexts.
* These updates relate to clinical information, Tasmanian and Australian Government recommendations and guidelines, business support, and changes to local services.
* Relevant COVID-19 Pathways include:
* COVID-19 Assessment and Management
* COVID-19 Assessment and Management in Residential Aged Care
* COVID-19 Information
* COVID-19 Impact on Local Services
* COVID-19 Telehealth.
* If you haven’t used Tasmanian HealthPathways before, the username is **connectingcare** and the password is **health**
* You can also download a fact sheet on how to use the COVID-19 Tasmanian HealthPathways [here](https://www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Using-Tasmanian-HealthPathways-for-COVID-19-fact-sheet-APPROVED.pdf), and watch a short video tutorial [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEw27QWpuyY&feature=youtu.be).

### *COVID-19 Update* eNewsletter

Stay up to date with the latest COVID news and resources for primary health professionals by subscribing to Primary Health Tasmania’s *COVID-19 Update* newsletter. You can subscribe [here](https://primaryhealthtas.us17.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=c2a64021f1e964b94f2727757&id=bc0451cbdb).

## Example scenarios to consider as part of your planning

### Resident positive for COVID-19

A nurse in the aged care facility has just received a phone call from the pathology laboratory to say Mrs Jones’ swab test is positive for COVID-19.

Mrs Jones has had a worsening cough and fever for two days. The swab was taken yesterday. She is in Room 4. Now that the nurse thinks about it, he noticed one of the other nursing staff coughing this morning at handover and night staff were concerned about two other residents feeling a “bit off”.

### Staff member positive for COVID-19

A staff member (carer) was sent home from work two days ago mid-shift. The staff member had a sore throat three days ago but did not want to mention it during their shift because they thought it would be difficult to replace them. The next day the sore throat persisted, and they developed a cough.

The staff member has just called to say they had a test and it was positive for COVID-19.

### Frequent attender positive for COVID-19

The husband of a long-term resident called to say he won’t be in today because he had a test for COVID-19, and it is positive. He visits the facility every day and is there from breakfast to after dinner. He is a great help when he is there, often making cups of tea and talking to residents who do not receive many visitors.

## Key information and resources

* The Australian Government has detailed the steps to be followed by aged care facilities if there is a COVID-19 positive case. *First 24 hours – managing COVID-19 in residential aged care facilities*   
  [bit.ly/2ZrGRNb](https://bit.ly/2ZrGRNb)
* Links to useful resources for aged care workers [bit.ly/3ixAakd](https://bit.ly/3ixAakd), including the Tasmanian Government’s *COVID-19 Outbreaks in Residential Aged Care Facilities Toolkit* [bit.ly/2Rj7uiw](https://bit.ly/2Rj7uiw)
* *CDNA national guidelines for the prevention, control and public health management of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care facilities in Australia* [bit.ly/2DMSkiu](https://bit.ly/2DMSkiu)
* *The COVID-19 Assessment and Management in Aged Residential Care Tasmanian HealthPathway* provides information for preparing, preventing, assessing and managing a suspected or confirmed case in a residential aged care facility   
  <https://tasmania.communityhealthpathways.org/> (username: connectingcare and password: health)
* Access after-hours general practice supportthrough GP Assist<https://services.primaryhealthtas.com.au/after-hours-support-health-professionals>

# Get in touch

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