Letter to GPs – COVID-19 outbreak in your facility

All residents require their usual ongoing medical care, including essential allied health care, while an outbreak is occurring.  All visiting GPs should be informed at the start of the outbreak and provided with the contact details of the clinical oversight manager from the facility on the team.

Below is a sample letter for GPs. Primary Health Tasmania has edited a sample letter which can be found in Appendix 6 of the *COVID-19 guidelines for outbreaks in residential care facilities* developed by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA)

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidelines-for-outbreaks-in-residential-care-facilities>

Please edit the information in the letter below as appropriate for your facility and your situation.

[Facility Letterhead]

……/……/……

**Respiratory outbreak at [Facility Name]**

Dear doctor,

There is an outbreak of acute respiratory illness affecting *residents and/or staff* at our facility. The outbreak may involve some of your patients, who may require review.

It is important to establish if the outbreak is caused by **SARS-CoV-2**. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by SARS-CoV-2, is a notifiable condition.

Control measures that the facility has been directed to implement include:

* Isolation of symptomatic residents
* Use of appropriate PPE when providing care to ill residents
* Exclusion of symptomatic staff from the facility
* Restriction/limitation of visitors to the facility until the outbreak has resolved
* Promotion of thorough hand washing and cough and sneeze etiquette.

As part of activating our Outbreak Management Plan, please note the following:

**Key contacts and facility information:**

* The key contact person to liaise with at our facility is *(insert name, job title, and preferred contact details)*.
* The following changes have been made to building access, entry and screening procedures: *(insert changes here, e.g. you must call this number to gain access to the building on arrival; you will require identification and evidence that you have received an influenza vaccine in 2020).*
* We ask that you notify the key contact person (named above) of any changes to the in-hours or after-hours care arrangements for your patients.

**Testing protocols and procedures:**

* The testing protocol and procedure: *(edit this section as required – an example of an action may be – in light of a positive COVID test result, Public Health Services have directed the facility to test all residents regardless of symptoms).*

**Continuity of care:**

* The following arrangements are in place to ensure continuity of care; *e.g. use of telehealth procedures, details of process for updating medication charts)*
* Some of our residents in rooms xxx or wing x will be cohorted or relocated.
* Please ensure that you observe hand hygiene procedures and use appropriate PPE when visiting your patients. *(E.g. please bring your own PPE, or PPE is available at the facility and you must don and doff in the areas allocated)*

Please note the Communicable Disease Network of Australia (CDNA) recommends limiting the use of antibiotics to patients with evidence of bacterial superinfection, which is uncommon.  <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidelines-for-outbreaks-in-residential-care-facilities>

Should you require further information regarding COVID-19, please refer to the Australian Government Department of Health website:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Yours sincerely,

**[Name]**

[Position]

[Facility/Organisation]