

PANDEMIC COMMUNICATION: COVID-19 UPDATE TO AGED RESIDENTIAL CARE

This update is prepared by the Capital & Coast and Hutt Valley District Health Boards. It is consistent with Ministry of Health advice. The Ministry of Health remains the definitive source of information.

Our focus is on ensuring you have the information you need, when you need it, in order for you to care for your staff and the people who depend on your service.

Any questions regarding this communication may be directed to COVID-19Questions@ccdhb.org.nz. Please also copy in your contract manager if you have one. All emails to the COVID-19 email address will be logged and responded to by an appropriate team member.

The purpose of this advice is to provide updates and guidance on:

- DHB visits to ARC facilities
- Mobile testing teams
- Managing Deteriorating Health - Escalation pathway
- PPE requests
- New Ministry of Health guidance on dementia

DHB VISITS TO ARC FACILITIES

Since Director General of Health Ashley Bloomfield's announcement that DHBs will be visiting facilities, we have had a lot of interest from our ARCs. We are planning how to connect with you and make our visits valuable for you. We want to support you in your efforts to keep your residents and staff safe, so whether virtually or face-to-face, you will have access to our team's expertise as well as the expertise of an infection control nurse.

Some more information on how we will approach these visits will follow soon. If you have any questions in the meantime, please email COVID-19questions@ccdhb.org.nz

MOBILE TESTING

Mobile testing teams are available to provide outreach testing in residential care facilities. These teams will support you to access timely swabbing and testing for your residents if they are showing any signs of COVID-19.

Please refer to **attachment 1** on the process for accessing the mobile testing and swabbing teams, as well as contact information for the teams.

Our three teams are based in Kapiti, Wellington and the Hutt Valley operating 10am to 4pm 7 days a week.

MANAGING DETERIORATING HEALTH - ESCALATION PATHWAY

In our Easter update sent Thursday 9 April we included an escalation pathway for ARC residents. This is a guidance and decision-making pathway to follow while we are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This pathway was developed with input from a wide range of people across the system, including Health of Older

teams, Psychogeriatrics, GPs, ARC managers and nurses, our ethics advisor, Māori and Pacific Health, and Palliative Care.

As usual, your GP is your first port of call. If indicated, our Health of Older People specialist teams are available 24/7. Our teams can prescribe remotely, provide virtual advice via zoom, and where necessary they can visit the patient when there are no other options.

If you haven't already, please print **Attachment 2** and keep in sight for quick reference. The document also includes the contact details for the Health of Older People teams.

ACCESS TO PPE

A national ordering process for DHBs has been stood up today to initially distribute masks with other PPE products being added moving forward. What this means is that we need to provide the Ministry of Health with an estimate of PPE requirements – initially masks. If you need to access more PPE please complete the attached (**Attachment 3**) request form and email it to <mailto:COVID-19questions@ccdhb.org.nz>.

It's important to reiterate PPE is only effective when used properly and appropriately, in conjunction with good infection control processes – cleaning surfaces regularly, hand hygiene and keeping a 2m distance from others. It also means staying away from work if you are unwell.

DONNING AND DOFFING VIDEOS

Please take the time to refresh yourselves with the correct donning and doffing procedures when using PPE.

- [Donning and doffing PPE](#) - 9 March 2020 (CCDHB)
- [PPE N95 donning and doffing](#) (CCDHB Vimeo)
- [Donning Doffing PPE Mask Visor](#) (CCDHB Vimeo)

Ministry of Health guidance on the use of PPE in health care can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-essential-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-health-care>

NEW GUIDANCE ON DEMENTIA

On 11 April the Ministry of Health issued additional advice for aged care providers with residents with dementia during Alert Level https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/covid-19-residents_with_dementia_on_alert_level_4-11apr20.pdf

This is additional to other guidance provided which can be found here: [health.govt.nz/covid-19](https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19)

The advice recognises you and your staff are in a good position to manage the care and wellbeing of your residents with dementia, in particular around creating small 'bubbles' of residents, and understanding care arrangements in place such as EPOA and Advance Care Plans.

We have shared with you some of the tips from Dementia New Zealand, and welcome your own tips and tricks you would like to share with other facilities. Please send these to your contract manager if you have one, or to <mailto:COVID-19questions@ccdhb.org.nz>

The Health Quality and Safety Commission has a range of guidance for preventing and controlling COVID-19 outbreaks in New Zealand aged residential care, which can be found here <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/aged-residential-care/publications-and-resources/publication/3975/>

THINGS TO DO IN LOCKDOWN

Once again, courtesy of Dementia New Zealand, we can be reminded that there is life outside of lockdown. Your residents may enjoy travelling from their armchair to the deep south of Tairaroa Head in Dunedin where a five month old Royal Northern albatross chick can be viewed in real time 24/7 here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9XNKQY4tQc>

At five months this chick weighs around 9kg and won't fledge until around eight months of age. Its parents are 25 and 21 years old, have mated for life, and return to Tairaroa Head every two years to lay an egg and hatch a chick. Royal albatrosses are some of the longest living birds in the world, regularly living to the age of 40. The most famous of the Tairaroa albatrosses was Grandma, who raised her last chick at the age of 62.

QUESTIONS

Again, please email any questions to COVID-19questions@ccdhb.org.nz and a member of our team will respond.

THANK YOU

We would like to recognise and thank you for the work that you are doing. We are aware that our community providers are front and centre in the COVID-19 response and we appreciate your commitment and professionalism in these challenging times.

Rachel Haggerty

Incident Controller
Community IMT