

25 February 2021

Dear residents and families

RE: COVID-19 vaccination program

I am writing to update you on the nationwide program of a COVID-19 vaccination which is underway.

Residential aged care residents are among the first who will receive the vaccine. Aged care residents will receive the Pfizer vaccine, with the residential vaccination program expected to run over the next 12 weeks.

At this stage we have not had the vaccination clinic date confirmed for Helping Hand, but we are getting ready and want to give you as much time as possible to make your decision.

It is voluntary to be vaccinated. While it is not mandatory to be vaccinated, Helping Hand is strongly encouraging all eligible residents, clients, staff and volunteers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccination is an effective tool in preventing transmission of vaccine preventable diseases, and we acknowledge the important role this plays in protecting our workforce, residents, clients, and community.

Before receiving your COVID-19 vaccination, residents or their nominated representative will be asked to complete a consent form. Over the next few days we will distribute consent forms to residents or their nominated representative.

Helping Hand will be working with General Practitioners (GPs) to identify if residents are able to receive the vaccination. A very small number of people may have health conditions or be on medications that may impact suitability to receive the vaccination. If you would like to discuss this with your GP, please inform nursing staff who will arrange it.

When completed, please return the signed consent form ready for vaccination day to the administration desk. As more information is provided on actual clinic dates, we will keep you informed.

There is a lot of information about the Pfizer vaccine and the vaccination program available via the Federal Government. Enclosed are two flyers which provide information about Pfizer vaccine, and information for residents in aged care homes. We have extra copies of these documents at reception.

Regarding the seasonal flu vaccination and the current visitor processes:

The requirement for vaccination against influenza currently remains in place for the 2021 influenza season. The influenza vaccination program is planned for roll out approximately two weeks after the second COVID-19 vaccination. We will keep you informed about when the flu vaccine becomes available. The 2020 visitor card can still be used when entering a Helping Hand care home.

The existing screening and visitor processes will also remain in place at this stage. While we are excited at the reduction in risks as vaccinations are completed, it will still be some time before we can lift the contact tracing requirements.


If you have any questions, please contact management at your care home.

Thank you for your cooperation throughout this process. We appreciate your support as we manage this large – and incredibly important – logistical exercise.

Yours sincerely



Chris Stewart
Chief Executive Officer



Dr Craig Whitehead¹
Helping Hand Board Director
Chair, Helping Hand Client Care Committee

¹ Craig Whitehead is a Geriatric Specialist at Flinders University, a Committee Member of the Department of Rehabilitation and Aged Care and a Member of the Aged Care Advisory Committee to the Australian Health Protection Principles Committee (AHPPC).