



Dear aged care service providers

Re: Checks of infection control practices and correct use of PPE

The recent increased number of COVID-19 outbreaks in Victoria and other states has reinforced the need for everyone working in the aged care sector to remain alert and ready.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is using the full range of our regulatory powers during the pandemic to ensure that providers meet your obligations with respect to the Aged Care Quality Standards and implement all necessary steps to mitigate the risks of transmission of the virus consistent with the advice of health authorities.

Under the Aged Care Quality Standards in the Aged Care Act, every aged care provider is responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide safe, respectful and quality care and services. Providers are also responsible for ensuring that staff have the necessary training, including in infection control practices and procedures, and in the appropriate use of PPE including gloves, face masks, face shields and gowns.

The Commission will shortly commence undertaking unannounced checks of services to observe infection control practices and ensure that everyone is adhering to safe personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols and infection control arrangements. Priority is being given to checks on residential aged care homes in the greater Melbourne metropolitan area and Mitchell Shire in Victoria.

Where staff are found not to be applying correct PPE or other infection control practices, the Commission will consider taking appropriate regulatory action including consideration of sanctions.

Both the Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Health have published and distributed a range of resources (including expert advice and online learning modules) for use by providers and their staff to reinforce their training and serve as reminders for all aged care workers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Aged care providers can request PPE such as face masks, face shields, gloves and gowns from the National Medical Stockpile by submitting an online application through the Commonwealth Department of Health's Consultation Hub at <https://consultations.health.gov.au/health-grants-and-network/18d6cd12/>. The National Medical Stockpile is not intended to be a general supply line for PPE; it is for emergency purposes. Aged care providers are asked to use their own supply of PPE first and to request extra supply as and when needed.

The Commission acknowledges the ongoing efforts of all aged care residential and home services to protect older Australians at this critical time.

J. M. Anderson

Ms Janet Anderson PSM
Commissioner
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