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Media Release

Safety first for Hawkesbury Living consumers – COVID-19

Some of Hawkesbury Living aged care's 134 consumers (or residents) have been temporarily relocated to alternative accommodation to ensure they have access to the best available healthcare.

A total of 25 consumers have been transferred to Nepean Private, Nepean, and Hawkesbury hospitals following detailed health assessments.

Those transferred are at-risk clients who have recently received their second vaccination, had one dose, or have respiratory issues.

Four of the 25 have tested positive to the Delta variant and have mild symptoms.

More than 85 per cent of Hawkesbury Living consumers and 76 per cent of staff have been vaccinated, receiving either one or two doses.

Those remaining clients who want to be vaccinated will receive their first or second dose.

There have been no COVID-19 related deaths at Hawkesbury Living.

Group CEO Kimberley Talbot said it was decided to transfer some consumers to nearby hospitals as an added safety measure.

"Their care will be similar to that provided at Hawkesbury Living with the added security of on-the-ground specialist clinical expertise should it be required," Ms Talbot said.

"The Richmond Club will coordinate the delivery of care and comfort packages from consumers' families to their loved ones in the hospitals, and they will continue to have access to their families via video calls.

"Early vaccinations have given our elderly consumers a very good level of protection."

All consumers who tested positive are either asymptomatic or experiencing mild symptoms. The majority are in the later stages of their infection and are asymptomatic.

Eight of Hawkesbury Living's 184 staff have tested positive and are in isolation.

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Of those consumers who remain in the facility, 77 are COVID-free and 15 who are COVID-positive are asymptomatic and in isolation.

Hawkesbury Living has engaged a nurse advisor, who is experienced in supporting facilities with COVID, to work on site, and local GP Mark Brunacci, who has a special interest in respiratory medicine, will conduct thorough daily reviews of every consumer.

All consumers and staff are tested daily for COVID-19 and staff wear mandatory personal protective equipment (PPE).

"We have been working very closely with NSW Health, the Australian Government Department of Health, and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission," Ms Talbot said.

"The health network that has been coordinated by the NSW and Commonwealth governments has been outstanding in their efficiency to coordinate additional services to our site."

Ms Talbot reassured consumers' loved ones that providing the best possible care for their relatives was paramount.

"I empathise with our families and understand this time is extremely stressful. We consider the health and wellbeing of their loved ones and the primary carers foremost in their ongoing care during the pandemic.

"I communicate regularly with the families of our consumers who have been affected, phoning them throughout the day and each evening I send them a written update from my site acting general manager.

"It has been critical in enabling me to directly voice any of their concerns to the relevant government bodies and hospitals.

"The positive feedback from families regarding the care of their relatives at Hawkesbury Living has been overwhelming.

"We hold video teleconferencing meetings to update all our stakeholders on our COVID-19 strategy.

"We will continue to keep families and the community updated," Ms Talbot said.

"On behalf of our board of directors I would like to sincerely thank the families of our consumers who have been so understanding as we navigate the continuity of care of their loved ones, the NSW and Commonwealth governments, especially the clinical first responders who have been working on site."

For media enquiries contact Susan Connelly on 0410 077 046.

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