

07 July 2021

Dear Arcare Community,

### COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Many people have expressed an understandable interest in Arcare's response to the COVID-19 vaccination roll out, particularly the status of our clients and team members. In the interest of transparency, I want to explain some of the behind-the-scenes limitations we have faced in the last few months, and to highlight what we have been doing to overcome them as best we can.

We have realised the importance of vaccination against COVID-19 in the protection of our clients and team members since the various forms of the vaccine were first made available. We have consistently strongly encouraged uptake by all.

Unfortunately, the numbers of team members who are reporting having had the first or both jabs are not as high as we would all ideally like, and it is clear to us that this is not solely a question of team members 'not wanting to receive the vaccine'.

### Limitations

There are several barriers to vaccination for our team, namely:

1. The supply of the COVID-19 vaccines, particularly Pfizer, to the broader Australian population has been limited by shipments and production. As a result, many of our team members who have wanted to be vaccinated have struggled to do so.

Even now, we have team members telling us that they have tried to book and are being told that first available appointments, even for aged care workers, are in August 2021.

2. The in-reach clinics organised by the Commonwealth Government to our Residences only extended to clients, with only "left-over doses" (if any) being offered to team members.

There is also no doubt that there are those who choose not to be vaccinated due to hesitancy following media reporting of side effects etc – both clients and team members. Once again, we are working on ways to overcome this, including providing access to accurate information on each vaccine in multiple languages for team members to review.

### **"I want to know the numbers of your staff who have been vaccinated?"**

Whilst we understand that some of you may feel that this would represent the degree of risk to clients should the virus enter one of our residences, the reality is that the numbers are constantly changing and are unlikely to be accurate at any given time for a variety of reasons which include:

- 1) It is not currently mandatory for team members to disclose their vaccination status, with some waiting until they are fully vaccinated before updating us.
- 2) Contractors and agency workers are not currently required to disclose their vaccination status to Arcare as we are not their direct employer.

3) As staff members get vaccinated day to day, the numbers will constantly change.

Therefore, some of our data could be weeks behind or inaccurate as at the date of reporting, with all the best intentions in mind.

Following the National Cabinet advice regarding mandatory vaccination expected mid-September 2021, they have since advised that residential aged care workers can access a vaccine through several avenues including various clinics and dedicated hubs. Arcare will be wholly partaking in this option to improve the uptake of the vaccine amongst staff as quickly as possible by:

- paying team members 2 hours of leave to access the vaccine
- taking clients and team members in Arcare busses to access the vaccine where possible.

We assure you that we are continuing to work on strategies to encourage the uptake of the vaccine, and respectfully ask for your patience and understanding, particularly for our team members in our Residences. Many are desperate to do the right thing by getting vaccinated and have simply been unable to do so.

Arcare stands by our team members and clients and will do whatever it takes to help them access the vaccinations as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



**Colin Singh**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Arcare**