

memo

memo no: 844
to: All Lifebridge Staff, Volunteers and Board
from: Bronwyn Mitchell, CEO
date: 15 February 2022
subject: COVID-19 Response Update

Dear Lifebridge Staff and Volunteers,

The Omicron variant continues to move through our communities impacting staff, volunteers, customers and their families. Although there is a sense of things returning to “normal”, instances of COVID related illness and unplanned leave continues to have a significant impact on Lifebridge. With the return of students to school and public transport our level of concern for staff and customers remains very high.

Lifebridge will continue to maintain all current health and safety protocols. We do not envisage our COVID-19 response and vigilance to the use of PPE, health and hygiene requirements changing for the next several months. During the Work, Health & Safety Committee meeting last week, a number of important issues were raised by the HSE’s on behalf of staff. Concerns and questions were taken to the Executive Team and have resulted in an update to Safe Work Plans. Please review the following Q&A’s:

QUESTION: Do customers need to have a negative RAT or PCR test prior to returning to service?

ANSWER: No. In most instances Lifebridge customers cancel services during their period of quarantine/isolation. Most customers recommence services after 7-14 days of quarantine/isolation. Lifebridge does not require the customer to produce a negative test to recommence service, however all staff are required to observe the following risk mitigations:

1. Prior to service you must ask the 4 customer questions and escalate immediately to Beverly Smallmon if the customer/carer is (still) experiencing symptoms or answers “yes” to any of the questions.
2. During service delivery, staff and volunteers must wear all PPE and follow health and hygiene practices. **Masks must be worn at all times.**
3. For instances where a customer requires service during their isolation/quarantine period, staff shall attend a briefing with a member of the Lifebridge Clinical Team and receive training on the use and disposal of next level PPE.

- a. Are you feeling unwell/experiencing any symptoms?
- b. Have you tested positive to COVID-19 or are you waiting on test results?
- c. Have you been in contact with anyone who is waiting for a COVID-19 test result?
- d. Have you been in contact with anyone who has tested positive to COVID-19?

QUESTION: Are Lifebridge Support Workers required to support customers in taking a RAT or PCR test?

ANSWER: No. If a customer requests support from Lifebridge to take a RAT at home, or attend a clinic for a PCR test, this request must be escalated to Beverly Smallmon. A member of the Lifebridge Clinical Team (Danielle Burgess, Shannon Burns or Mark Hearn) will be assigned responsibility for supporting the customer in completing a test while using next level PPE and protocols.

QUESTION: Are there any limitations on numbers of customers in Lifebridge buses?

ANSWER: No. There are no current limits to the number of customers attending activities and using Lifebridge transport, provided the following practices are adhered to at all times:

1. Prior to service (at pick-up) the customer is asked the series of 4 questions. Customers are excluded from service if they are experiencing any covid related symptoms or are considered a "close contact". Each instance must be escalated to Beverly Smallmon for follow-up action.
2. Staff and volunteers must wear masks at all times and strongly encourage customers to wear a mask when being transported.
3. Ensure all staff and customers attending group activities are double vaxed.
4. Maintain social distancing requirements and hygiene protocols including regular hand washing/sanitisation and disinfecting vehicle surfaces.

I take this opportunity to extend a very big thank you to the WHS Committee for their work, commitment and support provided to staff during this difficult period now extending over 2 years. The WHS Committee meets every second month and is an escalation point for any enquiries, concerns or questions you may have regarding your work and environment.

Booster Shots

It is a requirement of Lifebridge's funding streams to report on staff and customers receiving a Covid Booster Shot.

- Please contact the appropriate Customer Care Manager if a customer advises you they have received a Booster Shot. The Care Manager is responsible for updating the record in VisiCase.
- All Lifebridge staff and volunteers are encouraged to receive their Booster when it becomes available. Please forward a copy of your updated Covid-19 Vaccination Certificate to:
human.resources@lifebridge.org.au

Staff Availability

Please contact rosters@lifebridge.org.au if you have any additional short-term availability over the next couple weeks to backfill staff on unplanned leave and maintain service delivery for our valued customers.

Please continue to take care and hoping you all stay safe and well.

Regards,



Bronwyn
CEO