memo

memo no: 864

to: All Lifebridge Staff and Volunteers

from: Bronwyn Mitchell

date: 21 December 2022

subject: Requirement for COVID-19 Vaccination

Hi everyone,

The [Public Health (COVID-19 Care Services) Order (No 3) 2022](#) lapsed on 30 November 2022. This means that Covid-19 vaccination of aged care and disability services workers is no longer a legislated mandatory requirement. The Covid-19 vaccination status of workers is now the responsibility of the organisation and at their determination using workplace occupational health and safety frameworks.

The Department of Health have directed employers in high-risk settings to ensure there are appropriate risk mitigation strategies in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection for customers and staff. Please see below an excerpt from a recent memorandum to employers:

All in-home care service providers should maintain vigilance to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into a person's home. Providers should undertake their own risk assessments to determine safe delivery of services. These should take into consideration the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community, vaccination status of both staff and client and types of services being provided.

Staff and clients should be strongly encouraged to stay [up to date](#) with all vaccinations including COVID-19 and influenza, to aid protection against severe disease for themselves and others. Everyone aged 16 years and older is recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose to maintain an 'up to date' status. A staff member who tests positive for COVID-19 should not provide a home care service for 7 days after their positive test.

Based on the advice and recommendations of the NSW Department of Health and the Australian Department of Health & Aged Care, Lifebridge has determined that all current and future support staff must have received a minimum three doses of an approved Covid-19 vaccine. This will remain an ongoing condition of employment with a policy review scheduled for 31st March 2023.

Any extension or upgrade to the Lifebridge Covid-19 vaccination policy will be based on the following:

1. Prevalence of Covid-19 in the community and amongst staff and customers,

2. Potential impact on service delivery due to staff contracting Covid-19,

3. Advice provided by the NSW Department of Health and Australian Department of Health & Aged Care for care support staff to be "up to date" and "fully vaccinated" against Covid-19 including the likely recommendation of annual Covid boosters,

4. Lifebridge internal risk assessments,

5. Any other advice provided by NSW or federal government departments, Aged Care and NDIS Commissions or associated agencies regarding Covid-19 vaccinations.

During the next 3 months all Lifebridge staff are required to maintain the following protocols to mitigate risk of exposure and spread of Covid-19.

1. Do not attend work for 7 days following a positive Covid-19 test and until free of all respiratory symptoms,

2. Continue to wear masks when providing services in-home, in the Cottage and during transport.

3. Maintaining 1.5 meters social distancing wherever possible, and

4. Prior to service delivery ask customers if they are experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms. If the answer is "yes" contact Shelley Scorrano for a risk assessment and protocols to be adopted. These may include use of full PPE kit and arranging customer testing.

We remind all staff of the Australian Government's High-Risk Settings Pandemic Payment available for eligible staff who work in a high risk setting, including home care support services, and cannot go to work because they have tested positive for COVID-19.

The next three months will be critical as our resourcing is stretched to provide for school holidays, annual leave and unplanned leave. We ask that all staff remain vigilant and monitor behaviours that may increase the risk of exposure to Covid-19.

We wish everyone a safe and healthy Christmas holiday season. Please take care.

Regards,

Bronwyn Mitchell
CEO