

Useful Resources for Residents and Families in a COVID-19 Outbreak

The Older Person's Advocacy Network (OPAN) is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health to provide information and individual advocacy support to older people and their families receiving Commonwealth funded aged care services.

OPAN delivers its services through a Network of state and territory-based service delivery organisations (SDO). In Victoria Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) is the service delivery organisation. Your contact at Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) is Phillipa Campbell.

A range of collateral has been developed to help aged care residents and families to be kept informed and have a voice in an active outbreak or lockdown. These resources have been developed at the request of providers during Covid-19 outbreaks to date and have proved useful in informing and supporting older people and their families. OPAN recognises that providers have much to do quickly and these resources are offered to help support their efforts.

Resources available include:

- ★ An initial OPAN and Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) co-branded letter outlining advocacy support.
- ★ To accompany the letter, an information sheet called "Know Your Rights".
- ★ A "Know Your Rights" poster for placement around the facility.
- ★ A plain English flyer (A5) and poster (A3) explaining facility lockdown to residents.
- ★ Suggested text for a thank you note from the Provider to residents in lockdown.
- ★ Script for a video for a Provider to have recorded for residents, explaining the restrictions.
- ★ A video with Dr Norman Swan, using the above script, explaining facility lockdown to residents (available in English, Greek, Italian, Chinese Simplified and Vietnamese). vimeo.com/showcase/7344129
- ★ Dr Norman Swan video introducing advocacy. vimeo.com/428398066
- ★ Dr Norman Swan video introducing the Older Person's Covid Support Phone Line. (video available in English, Greek, Italian, Chinese Simplified and Vietnamese). open.com.au/opcsl
- ★ Information on the Older Person's Covid Support Line in 64 languages. open.com.au/opcsl

Please contact OPAN or Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) if you would like more information about this document or the resources available.



1800 700 600



open.com.au



era.asn.au

Supporting Residents and Families in a COVID-19 Outbreak

The following information represents strategies learnt from recent Covid-19 outbreaks in aged care across Australia. The strategies have proved effective in improving communication with residents and families. OPAN and Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) recommends RACF Providers consider implementing the following measures inside their facility to support residents and families during an outbreak.

Communication:

- ★ A dedicated, on-the-ground Comms Team to deal with all of the family enquiries/issues that arise - families should be asked how frequently they would like to be updated (e.g. daily; every second day; etc; or when health status changes).
- ★ Consideration of engaging a Crisis Comms Advisor
- ★ Daily email updates to all families detailing changes to processes regarding food, laundry, infection controls, staffing levels (even if there is nothing to report, it is important to communicate this).
- ★ Family Video Meetings – if there are a significant number of residents and families requiring advocacy, group Family Zoom Meetings are a safe space for families to raise issues + gain information
- ★ Consider sending a condolence message to families where a resident passes from Covid-19
- ★ Creating and communicating a process for returning the belongings of residents who have passed and adhering to that process.

Visitation and Contact:

- ★ Scheduled window visits for family members
- ★ Issuing all residents with a smart phone or tablet for regular external communication

Other:

- ★ Laundry Management Plan - this can easily go awry once infection control/quarantine measures come into play and cause great anxiety to residents and families.
- ★ The appointment of a “go-to” person inside the facility to whom advocates can escalate issues for resolution. It is important that advocates don’t have to wait in the same ‘queue’ as families, noting that whilst independent advocacy at the resident/family level is essential, it is also critical to ensure that advocates have the ability to escalate systemic issues to the provider’s management so that they can be addressed.

We hope that this document provides insight into way that residents and families can be supported in these difficult times. Please contact OPAN or Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) if you would like more information about this document or the resources available.



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