

RISK ALERT #3

Important Aged Care Guidance for Brokers



Australia's care services have been truly tested over the last few years. From changes in regulation, a Royal Commission, new Standards and new Commission, significant workforce challenges, increasing care complexity and financial strain; to list just some.

Supporting them through these risks and disruptions, and now the enormous weight of a pandemic, remains a strong focus for Ansvar. Through our connections with Brokers we will continue to offer ongoing advice, provide consultancy services, work with you on insurance solutions and continue the successful role we have played to strengthen risk management frameworks and strategies for good governance.

Prior to the Pandemic declaration, Ansvar issued guidance on preparing for such an event; we have had great feedback on its timeliness, usefulness and practicality. Thank you to those who have circulated it to your clients. We know many have assessed their current situation and management against the 8 Risks of Pandemic Management. We continue to update guidance and will continue to provide risk alerts throughout the coming months related to the pandemic.

We will also continue to raise awareness of the pre-pandemic risks that are still in play and must continue to have oversight. This is crucial; losing sight of strategic risks throughout an event like this can easily happen and makes bouncing back to usual operations even more challenging. Our next alert - Risk Alert #4 will focus on the 3 key HIGH strategic risks that all care organisations' boards and management teams should be mindful of and monitoring throughout the pandemic, with tips from experts on effective risk and governance practices.

Important directions and requirements were issued over the last two weeks that must be incorporated in to every Aged Care Facility's Pandemic Management Plan. We are seeing information coming from Governments on pandemic management for Aged Care Providers rapidly evolving and changing. Ansvar can support your clients with risk management guidance on implementing these measures.

IMPORTANT INCLUSIONS FOR AGED CARE PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT PLANS



1. Access Restrictions:

Residential Aged Care Facilities must comply with and enforce new Federal, State and Territory Government Directions.



2. Outbreak Risk Management:

Aged Care Providers should align their plans with recently published Guidelines for Infection Prevention and Management



Access Restrictions

Access to Residential Aged Care Facilities is restricted.

Exemptions include:

- Staff / contractors – general access exemptions do not apply to staff or contractors providing services or health care necessary for the operations of the facility.
- Visitors - limited to a maximum of two visitors at one time per day and only in the resident's own room.
- Visit duration – limited to a short duration – some facilities have completely closed visiting access other than for end of life support for residents.
- Restriction of children - children aged 16 years or less should be visiting only for end of life support for a resident.

No entry is permitted *under any exemption for:*

- Those who have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
- Those who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Those with fever or symptoms of acute respiratory infection
- After 1 May this year, those who have not been vaccinated against influenza

Risk Management implications to discuss with clients:

- Have Access Policies been reviewed and aligned with new Directions – are there specific barriers to comply with these that need addressing or support?
- Has the Pandemic Communications Plan been updated – how will the organisation inform stakeholders of obligations and monitor compliance? How will breaches be managed and reported?
- Can Social Access and Medical and Specialist Care Support Access be facilitated using alternative methods– has the organisation established social network platforms for resident / family contact, telehealth options for ongoing care assessments, business communication systems to support ongoing operational functions?
- Has an Influenza Vaccine Policy and Strategy been established – does this incorporate restrictions and obligations issued by new Government Directions, and include guidance on practical aspects such as vaccine access, monitoring staff compliance, contractor responsibilities and checking, reporting requirements and meeting compliance with Standards - particularly clinical and personal care, human resources and governance?
- Is Board / Responsible Body briefed on its obligations to ensure these Directions are fully implemented, risk assessed its policy and strategy and is monitoring its implementation?



Outbreak Risk Management

Guidance to Residential Care Facilities on Coronavirus (Covid-19) Outbreaks has recently been issued by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA), in conjunction with the Federal Department of Health which can be downloaded [here](#). This guidance provides a framework to comply with requirements under National Infection Control Standards and the Aged Care Act. While its reference is predominantly aged care, it is important to note the principles apply to any residential service (eg disability, school boarding etc).

Early this month we issued a risk alert advising on the development of a Pandemic Management Plan. An element (or subset) of this plan must be an Outbreak Plan (ie how do we prevent an outbreak and what we will do when we have a case and subsequent cases of Covid-19). We advised all organisations to have plans developed and ready to enact in accordance with ongoing advice from Government. The recent CDNA guidance should be accessed by clients and their organisations must move quickly to ensure their plan is aligned with this guidance and is implemented to support compliance with relevant standards.

Most facilities will already have an Outbreak Plan which they will have developed for influenza, gastro etc., however given the unprecedented context of Covid-19, these Outbreak Plans must be reviewed, updated and tested and fit for purpose for their pandemic response.

Risk Management implications to discuss with clients:

- Has the Outbreak Prevention and Management Plan (as part of the Pandemic Plan) been reviewed in light of the new guidance – what gaps and risks have you identified?
- Are staff and residents aware of the implications associated with adopting the guidance – everyone has a role to play, has a communication strategy been established?
- Has staff training been established – has the organisation developed / accessed training modules, guidance, including the [Department of Health's online training program](#)?
- Is Board / Responsible Body fully briefed on its obligations to ensure these Directions are fully implemented, risk assessed its policy and strategy and is monitoring its implementation?
- How will the organisation's monitoring systems adapt to monitor outbreak risks – has the audit program been reviewed to include specific COVID-19 elements, is the incident management system fully implemented across the organisation, does it work to an "incident severity rating" framework and does it facilitate immediate notifications to senior management for significant incidents?

Information current as of 30th March 2020.

Contact

Please contact Ansvar Insurance on 1300 650 540 or insure@ansvar.com.au regarding insurance coverage, claims support and advice.

If you have any specific Risk Management queries please contact Ansvar Risk, see below for details.



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