

ANMF COVID-19 Newsflash: Regis Aged Care

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) wrote to Regis management to seek an update on information in relation to your facility and their response to the current Omicron COVID-19 situation. Specifically, the ANMF has asked the following questions: in *italics*, and response from your employer in **bold**. Please note that this is the information that the facility has provided us.

If the answers below are contradictory to what you are experiencing, please advise the ANMF via our member support team so we can raise further questions with the facility.

1. *Could you please provide details on the strategies implemented to reduce transmission of the Omicron strain in your facility/facilities? Or alternatively, please feel free to provide a copy of your outbreak management plan.*

Regis continues to be informed and directed by the Department of Health together with our central internal infection control team on how best to manage the risks to our employees, residents and clients. Each Home has an Outbreak Management Plan (the Plan) which is tailored to each home's individual circumstances and is immediately activated in the event of an exposure or outbreak. It covers actions needed to be taken immediately and throughout the outbreak management period and is constantly reviewed internally and externally by many of the state Public Health Units and the Commonwealth Government

2. *Can you confirm that you have sufficient PPE and hand sanitizer to allow staff, and residents, to be kept safe during this pandemic (particularly if there were to be an outbreak at your facility)?*
All PPE and related inventory is managed centrally by our national procurement team. Regular communication is in place with Homes to ensure sufficient stock requirements. Our approach to fit testing N95 masks will be informed by relevant state public health/governing bodies. Staff undertake rigorous PPE and infection prevention training (which intensifies during an outbreak), which includes guidance on how to fit check, conducted by trained Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) lead nurses employed at every Home.
3. *Have staff been fit tested for N95 masks? If no, when is this to occur and what are the interim safety measures that will be established while staff are waiting for fit testing?*
Staff fit test on each application, and we have other types of in 95 masks Available if the standard duckbill type does not fit correctly. Southern Cross care have resources available for

staff on how to fit test a mask; including one that talks about facial hair and they have also received training on fitting masks.

4. *What payments or access to special leave will be granted for staff who are required to isolate pending getting access to a COVID test and obtaining the subsequent result? Noting that access to testing is now significantly delayed.*

Regis continues to support employees with various personal impacts of COVID in line with our policies and procedures. Staff have access to additional support where required, such as several payments which can be accessed through Services Australia/Tasmanian Public Health Hotline. In order to minimise staff disruption, Regis is organising onsite booster clinics from mid-January to mid-February 2022 for staff to attend and obtain their COVID-19 booster vaccination. If staff experience an adverse reaction from their COVID-19 booster vaccination, they can utilise their personal leave. If their leave is exhausted they are able to access the available government assisted payment.

5. *Will you be providing Rapid Antigen Testing for staff members? If so, what will the process be for access to these tests?*

We are providing RATs to staff as per state directions and access supply via the Government stockpile and supplement with direct procurement with various suppliers. We follow the changes to the testing guidelines as advised by Government, which include RATs being accepted as formal confirmation of positive COVID-19 cases.

6. *Are you willing to commit to presumptive workers compensation if a staff member becomes unwell, after a workplace exposure, with COVID-19?*

Whether or not individuals choose to lodge a workers compensation claim in response to any COVID related event remains an individual matter. As with any other claim, it is ultimately for the insurers to make a determination on the causation and link to the workplace in line with legislative requirements. We have an internal process to support our people through the lodgement process, as may be required.

7. *If a number of staff become unwell (or are not unwell but are required to isolate pending test results) with COVID-19, what plan is in existence to maintain safe staffing levels?*

As part of the Plan, we have operational processes in place to maintain safe staffing levels. Our Executive Crisis Management Team meet regularly (currently daily), and monitor all aspects of operations, which includes roster management and clinical guidance. An incentive payment made to staff during an outbreak assists our surge workforce efforts and assists with ensuring adequate staffing levels.

Employees are regularly advised of the support available to them during this difficult time and we also encourage the use of our Employee Assistance Program.

The ANMF Tasmanian Branch is 8000 plus members strong! Supporting nurses, midwives, and care workers as the only union in Tasmania employing nurses and care workers to represent members. This is why our Organisers and Member Support Team are uniquely positioned to understand your experiences, represent you in your workplace, and offer industrial advice that's relevant to you.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact our Member Support Team via email on membersupport@anmftas.org.au. Email is the preferred and fastest way of contacting the team. Alternatively, you can phone (03) 6223 6777 or 1800 001 241 if outside Hobart.

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
8 February 2022