

ANMF COVID-19 Newsflash:

Corumbene Care

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) wrote to Corumbene Care management to seek an update on information in relation to their response to the current Omicron COVID-19 situation, including the impact this is having on you and the subsequent care of residents. Specifically, the ANMF has asked of your facility the following questions: in *italics*, and the response from your employer is in **bold**.

If the answers below are contradictory to what you are experiencing, please advise the ANMF via our member support team so we can raise questions on your behalf 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.*

Our COVID Transmission strategies include:

- **Corumbene has an Outbreak Management Plan (OMP) which is currently reviewed on a weekly basis**
- **Membership of and participation in the Aged Care Sector Monthly Forum – facilitated by Tasmanian Government Aged Care Emergency Operations Centre (ACEOC) and Australian Government Department of Health**
- **Onsite review session with ACEOC was held on 6 December – with continuous improvement opportunities incorporated in to the OMP – Revision 6**
- **Session at UTAS in August re Outbreak Management - ACEOC • Member and participant of ACSA forums – including the Aged Care Sector forum held on 12 January 2022**
- **Staff forums to discuss infection protection control**
- **Communications to staff, residents and stakeholders**
- **Liaison with Public Health Unit**

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)?*
PPE & Sanitiser stock Yes - as part of our COVID readiness program we maintain a sufficient stock and on 18 January 2022 we received a large delivery of additional supplies from the national medical stockpile.
3. *Have staffing 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 are advised and checked with regards to fitting and supported by a buddy system.

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.*

Corumbene Care is able to provide staff with access to rapid antigen tests. Corumbene permanent staff who are required to isolate pending access to a COVID PCR test are eligible for paid personal/carers leave on provision of evidence; alternatively staff can apply for discretionary use of annual leave or long service leave

Casual staff who need financial assistance can apply for a State Government grant (<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/families-community/individual-grants>).

5. *In the instance that staff are required to receive a third COVID booster dose, will there be access to additional special paid leave/time to attend a booster appointment? If a staff member has an adverse reaction to the booster, will paid leave cover this time as well?*

Corumbene Care has not mandated but recommended staff obtain booster doses.

Corumbene has addressed staff boosters through an onsite session with some staff opting to attend State run clinics, pharmacy or GP appointments in their own or work time - depending on timing of when staff are scheduled for boosters. If a staff member had an adverse reaction to the booster, personal leave (as above) would cover this time as well.

6. *Are there any additional leave (over and above personal leave) arrangements available to staff who, not being unwell themselves, need to self-isolate or care for someone (e.g. child) that will be provided?*

See above response to question 4. Some staff have been able to work from home (subject to their role) whilst normal leave provisions have applied.

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

Yes - RATs are now available. During our recent 'High Risk exposure' lockdown which ended today, because of stock limitations, RAT's were initially accessed by staff directly from State Public Health collections points.

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

This would require further discussion with our insurers and we are happy to explore this.

9. *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?*

Our Outbreak Management Plan provides for this scenario with a number of strategies to maintain safe staffing levels. Staff are offered employee assistance through Relationships

Australia – on a free, confidential and anonymous basis; as well as free COVID-19 Aged Care Grief and Trauma Support Services through the Australian Government.

10. *Are you employing additional administration staff to deal with access and entry to your facility and any extra record keeping that is required?*

Yes – additional staff are rostered to support access management including a concierge service

11. *Could you please provide a copy of your staffing strategy and any staffing contingency plans?*

Our staffing strategy and staffing contingency plans are commercial in confidence and are facilitated through:

- **Our Outbreak Management Plan**
- **General workforce planning and rostering**
- **Agenda item in weekly Executive Meetings and our Outbreak Management Team**

Further, as the Aged Care Sector is a Commonwealth responsibility, the ANMF Federal Acting Secretary Lori-Ann Sharp has met with the Commonwealth to raise concerns and a call for action:

1. To address the poor booster shot roll out in aged care
2. Ensuring that there is sufficient PPE in all aged care facilities
3. Enable access to Rapid Antigen Testing for all staff and visitors
4. To make available surge staffing availability

Also, the ANMF will be collaborating with the Tasmanian Department of Health on behalf of Aged Care members via the State COVID-19 Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) stakeholder meetings. The ANMF will continue to raise matters that the Department of Health can do to assist Aged Care Facilities such as training, education, and advice.

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.

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
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