



Community Nursing BULLETIN No. 19

March 2020

FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL DVA COMMUNITY NURSING STAFF

This bulletin is being issued to provide an update to Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Community Nursing (CN) providers about COVID-19.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The World Health Organization has announced that COVID-19 is a pandemic. Currently, Australia does not have widespread community transmission of COVID-19. However, the situation is changing rapidly and the outbreak in Australia is being managed as a health emergency with some States and Territories declaring a State of Emergency.

DVA is being guided by information and advice provided by the Australian Government Department of Health (DOH). The latest information is available on their website at: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Temporary Change to Conducting 28 Day Reviews

Currently, as noted in Section 8.2 of the Notes for Community Nursing Providers (the Notes), a review of the care provided to all DVA CN clients should be conducted at the end of each 28 day claim period. While DVA would normally expect this review to be conducted face to face in the client's home, for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, CN providers may conduct the 28 day review by telephone, where clinically appropriate, to alleviate the need for an RN or EN to travel to a client's house where the sole purpose of the visit is to conduct this review. The client's progress notes / file should be updated following the review.

Information for Providers

CN Providers are requested to ensure all staff and sub-contractors take precautionary measures in line with the Department of Health and relevant State / Territory Government Departments.

There are a number of resources available on the Department of Health website at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-for-health-professionals-including-aged-care-providers-pathology-providers-and-healthcare-managers>

The Department of Health recently conducted a webinar addressing the role and capacity of Home Care Packages providers and Commonwealth Home Support Programme providers. The webinar covers a range of topics including infection control in aged care and home care



environments, epidemic planning for the home care environment, and the health plan for COVID-19. This is available at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/webinars/webinar-on-in-home-and-community-aged-care-covid-19-preparedness>

Information on Infection Control

The Department of Health has released an online infection control training module for care workers across a number of sectors including the health and aged care sectors. The training module covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control (IPC) for COVID-19, and takes approximately 30 minutes. This training module is available on the Department of Health website at: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/how-to-protect-yourself-and-the-people-you-are-caring-for-from-infection-with-covid-19>

In addition to information being provided by the Australian Government, Ausmed is providing a number of free hand hygiene and infection control online education sessions. For further information, visit the Ausmed website at: <https://www.ausmed.com/>

National Medical Stockpile – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

A factsheet about the increase to the National Medical Stockpile of personal protective equipment as part of the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is available on the Department of Health website at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-national-health-plan-national-medical-stockpile-purchase-of-masks-other-personal-protective-equipment-and-pharmaceuticals>

For issues relating to PPE please contact the Department of Health via email at: Stockpile.ops@health.gov.au

Open Arms

With the continually evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be an impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. Open Arms is a free and confidential counselling service that is available to all veterans, current serving personnel, and their families, should they require support.

Frequent updates to information about COVID-19, combined with potential requirements to self-isolate, may leave people feeling anxious, overwhelmed, isolated and vulnerable. If any veterans or family members need support, they can be referred to Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling. The phone number for Open Arms is 1800 011 046.

Designed by veterans for veterans, Open Arms works with a range of partners to ensure clients have access to the services they need. They can support clients with 24/7 telephone counselling, peer support, self-help resources, and much more.

Further information about Open Arms is available at: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/>

Have your Organisation's Details Changed?

If you have any changes to contact or other details, please contact the Community Nursing Contracts team via email at: Community.Nursing.Contracts@dva.gov.au