

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic

4 August 2020

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Subject question: Current outbreaks in Victoria, including numbers and providers

Question type: Spoken

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Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: I think this question is to the department. Is it possible, please, to get a list of all the current outbreaks in Victoria, along with the numbers—so naming all of the providers, all of the residences, and how many of those are infected and how many deaths have occurred in each. At the moment, as far as I can find, only a shortened list has been made publicly available. Is that possible?

Prof. Murphy: We would be happy to provide that, but we would like to provide it to the committee in camera. Some of the facilities don't want it publicly known that they have outbreaks. Many of them have been open about it, and it's in the media. But some of them have just had one staff member infected, and the facility's been locked down and it's been controlled, and they're worried about reputational issues. We could provide it to the committee in camera.

Senator SIEWERT: I'm concerned about that. I think the public have a right to know which facilities have been infected.

Senator Colbeck: Can I make a point there. One of the things that we have been stressing to the facilities is that all families who have a family member in their facility are advised of that—so the families engaged with those facilities are aware of what's happening. I think that is appropriate and quite reasonable. But I am concerned about the stress placed on facilities by some of the public elements of this approach. I understand where you're coming from in one sense, but the capacity of particularly some of the smaller facilities to deal with a huge influx of media inquiries can severely impact on the facility. In circumstances where they're doing well and the families have been appropriately advised, I think that as long as the families know what is going on—and we're ensuring that that is the case; part of our daily case management is to ensure that families know what's going on—I'm reluctant to have a public hit list of facilities that have been unfortunate enough to have a COVID outbreak within them. I understand—

Senator SIEWERT: Minister, I've only got a short amount of time, sorry. I hear where you're coming from. Are any of these facilities that have any level of infection still accepting new residents? If they are, the community have a right to know.

Senator Colbeck: No; the facilities are closed down.

Senator SIEWERT: All of them?

Senator Colbeck: They are all locked down. They aren't receiving visitors.

Senator SIEWERT: Not visitors—new residents.

Senator Colbeck: They are all effectively locked down.

Prof. Murphy: And to new residents—they don't take new residents when they've got an outbreak. That is a fundamental rule.

Senator SIEWERT: Even one?

Prof. Murphy: Even one. They won't take new residents.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you provide the list?

CHAIR: The committee can consider the matter you've raised further.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. I'm not prepared at this stage to accept that the whole list be given in camera. I think we need to have a further discussion about that.

Answer:

The Department is committed to transparency. However, due to the impact public disclosure can have on a provider, the service, their staff and residents, the Department of Health's (the Department) preference, on balance, is not to disclose information about individual services. Publication of the names and sites of aged care services affected by COVID-19 has resulted in significant media attention and distress for families of residents. It distracts services from their primary response to an outbreak, diverts needed resources and in some circumstances, has contributed to a reluctance of staff to come to work, negatively impacting the capacity of the service to provide quality care. It is important to note residents and their families in each facility with a COVID-19 outbreak are advised. This is particularly of concern in relation to facilities which have very few cases of illness present or suspected.

Noting this, the Department provides the committee the table below, which lists Victorian residential aged care facilities with more than five cases as at 17 August 2020. The facilities below are more likely to already be in the public domain due to the higher number of cases than other residential aged care services.

Table 1**Victorian residential aged care services with five or more staff or resident cases (60) as at 17 August 2020**

Florence Aged Care Facility Altona North	Jewish Care Hannah and Daryl Cohen Centre Windsor Aged Care Facility
Estia Health ACF Glen Waverley	Glendale Aged Care Facility
Rathdowne Place Aged Care Carlton	St Basil's Homes for the Aged in Victoria
Arcare Aged Care Craigieburn	Kalyna Care Aged Care Delahey
Bupa Templestowe Aged Care	Epping Gardens Aged Care
Bupa Aged Care Traralgon	Mercy Place Dandenong
Menarock Life Aged Care Rosehill	BlueCross Autumdale
CraigCare ACF Pascoe Vale	Twin Parks Aged Care Reservoir
Japara Millward Residential Aged Care Doncaster East	Villa Maria Catholic Homes St Bernadette's Sunshine North Aged Care
Japara Central Park ACF Windsor	Doutta Galla Aged Care Yarraville
Cumberland Manor ACF Sunshine North	VMCH Aged Care Residence Berwick
Menarock Life Aged Care Essendon	James Barker House Aged Care Footscray
Estia Aged Care Facility Ardeer	Grace Of Mary Greek Cypriot Elderly Hostel
Estia Keilor ACF	Estia Aged Care Heidelberg
Glenlyn Aged Care Facility	Mercy Place Wyndham ACF Werribee
Menarock Life Aged Care McGregor Gardens Pakenham	Mecwacare John Atchison Centre Hoppers Crossing
Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes Kilsyth	Hammond Aged Care
Baptcare Wyndham Lodge	Opal South Valley Highton
Bill Crawford Lodge	Japara Elanora Aged Care Brighton
St Georges Benetas Organisation ACF	Regis Brighton Aged Care
Bupa Aged Care Edithvale	Bluecross ACF Ruckers Hill
Japara Goonawarra Aged Care Facility Sunbury	Sutton Park McKenzie Aged Care Melton South
Royal Freemasons Gregory Lodge	BlueCross The Boulevard Mill Park
Embracia Moonee Valley Aged Care	Doutta Galla Aged Care Footscray
Aurum Aged Care Plenty	BlueCross Westgarth
Arcare Sydenham ACF	Mercy Place Parkville aged care
Outlook Gardens Aged Care Dandenong North	Village Glen Aged Care Residences - Mornington
Blue Cross Ivanhoe Aged Care	Aurum Aged Care Reservoir
Assisi Centre Aged Care	Arcare Aged Care Burnside
Doutta Galla Lynch's Bridge	BUPA Aged Care Sunshine