



HUNTER GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION

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As a urgent response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hunter GP Association strongly recommends the restriction of visitor access (“lockdown”) at Residential Aged Care Facilities

The Hunter General Practitioners Association recognises that Aged Care Facility residents are at very high risk from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because:

- the death rate from COVID-19 is highest in the elderly
- the death rate is highest in people with many chronic health problems
- once occurring within any nursing home it likely to spread rapidly to other residents and staff
- staff exposed may need to be isolated at home, making it difficult to find staff to look after residents
- in the height of a local epidemic, infected nursing home patients might not be able to obtain hospital or ICU beds
- there might be insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) to look after patients
- treatment by GPs in the nursing home might only be possible by telehealth measures.

To prevent Aged Care Facility residents from contracting COVID-19, we believe restriction of visitor access (“lock-down”) is the best option.

Stressing early social distancing and hygiene to all staff will be the other prevention activities, as well as keeping away any staff member who has a fever or respiratory symptoms.

Dr John Goswell
Chair
Hunter General Practitioners’ Association