

# RESPIRATORY INFECTION AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

<b>Policy &amp; Procedure Control</b>	
Policy & Procedure Name	<b>RESPIRATORY INFECTION AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE</b>
Policy & Procedure Status	APPROVED
Version No.	4.8
Date Approved	30 Oct 2024
Date of Next Review	30 Oct 2025
Approval Authority	Cancer Care Western NSW Executive and Board

## 1. Purpose

This policy aims to

- a) ensure that the health of guests, carers and staff at Western Care Lodge is protected,
- b) facilitate guests' ongoing access to treatment at the Central West Cancer Centre, and
- c) allow for the ongoing operation of the Lodge in providing accommodation for guests being treated for cancer, through procedures to minimise the likelihood of serious respiratory infections entering and/or spreading in the Lodge.

## 2. Scope

All staff, contractors, volunteers, guests, carers and visitors are required to comply with the specified procedures because of the ongoing spread of Covid-19 and other respiratory infections in western NSW.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1** CCW – Cancer Care Western NSW
- 3.2** The Lodge – Western Care Lodge
- 3.3** Vaccine – A vaccine approved by the Australian government for the control of human respiratory infections.
- 3.4** PCR Test – a test on swabs taken at an official testing centre.
- 3.5** Combination RAT – a Rapid Antigen Test to detect Covid-19, influenza A and influenza B and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), approved by the Australian Government.

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- 3.6 PPE - Personal protective equipment designed to protect people from Covid-19 and other severe respiratory infections.
- 3.7 PHU – Public Health Unit, NSW Health, Bathurst.

### 4. Statement of Principles

CCW is committed to adhering to all legislation, regulations and best practices and complying with the directions of the Public Health Unit and Western NSW Local Health District.

CCW is committed to cooperating with Central West Cancer Care Centre to facilitate access to treatment for guests at the Lodge as appropriate.

Emphasis is placed on people who are at higher risk of being infectious and becoming infected to protect the health and well-being of themselves and others at the Lodge. This expectation will be communicated at the time of enquiry and booking.

### 5. Policy for Covid-19 and Influenza

Covid-19 and influenza continue to spread in NSW, especially as waves of new variants. Other respiratory viruses such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) have also been spreading in NSW recently

These infections present a genuine health threat to guests, carers and staff at the Lodge and especially to people who are immuno-compromised or not recently booster vaccinated.

WCL will welcome patients who are booked and accepted for treatment at the Cancer Centre, and other patients and guests as arranged by the CCW Board with the Hospital and Health Service, subject to the following conditions.

### Vaccination

All people working, visiting and staying in the Lodge are **strongly encouraged** to be up to date with vaccinations for Covid-19 and Influenza as recommended for their age and health status by the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* and their doctor's advice.

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An RSV vaccine is available to adults 60 years and above. People must pay for this vaccine. Guests who are 60 years and above are encouraged to talk to their GP about the benefits, eligibility and cost of the RSV vaccine.

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-statement-on-the-administration-of-seasonal-influenza-vaccines-in-2024>

<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/covid-19>

### **Risk Assessment/Declaration**

All guests and carers will provide a completed *Respiratory Infection Risk Assessment Form* (Attachment 1) on arrival.

### **Symptoms and Suspected Cases**

Any people who have symptoms of a respiratory infection are not to enter the Lodge until their status is resolved.

Anyone who has had significant contact with people infected with a respiratory virus or have tested positive to a respiratory infection in the past 7 days is not to enter the Lodge until their status is investigated by testing with a Combination RAT.

The guest and carer will self-administer the Combination RAT in the presence of a staff member to help ensure that sampling, testing and interpretation is conducted correctly.

### **Risk Assessment/Test Outcome**

People who,

- a) currently have or have had symptoms of a respiratory infection in the past 7 days, OR
- b) are a household contact of, or have had other close contact with, someone with a respiratory infection in the past 7 days, OR
- c) have tested RAT positive on entry or in the past 7 days,

will be accepted, subject to their agreeing to take *additional infection control procedures* aimed at protecting other residents and staff within the Lodge (see below).

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If a guest or carer does not agree to comply with these conditions, the Manager may try to assist them by organising alternative accommodation.

### **Masks**

Masks will be available in the foyer and all people are encouraged to wear a mask inside the Lodge.

If guests and carers return home, they should remain isolated from potential sources of respiratory infections.

Guests and Carers returning to the Lodge must comply with all the conditions above.

### **Other people**

**Visitors and Contractors** will be welcome inside the Lodge if they have no symptoms of respiratory infection and complete a risk declaration form.

**Medical staff** will be welcome to stay if they have no symptoms, advise the Manager of any change in their health and agree to follow her directions if they develop respiratory symptoms.

### **Records**

Records of all guests and carers, their addresses and contact details are maintained in the Callista booking system.

Contact details of visitors, non-essential contractors and short-term accommodation will be maintained by the Manager.

### ***Additional infection control procedures***

- Limit contact with other guests.
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Wear a clean mask in common areas and dispose of contaminated masks in their room's garbage bin.
- Monitor and record their temperature daily for 7 days
- Combination RAT on days 2, 4 and 7 after entry.
- Advise the Manager as soon as possible if they develop symptoms of respiratory infection or test RAT positive.
- Undertake to follow the Manager's directions (which may include changing rooms, isolating in their room, etc).
- Depending on the severity of symptoms, the person's ability to appropriately care for themselves (+/- assistance) in their rooms and

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the Lodge's capacity at that time to manage the person's health and the risk they present to others, the Manager may have to arrange moving the guest and carer to alternative accommodation outside the Lodge).

### **PPE and cleaning**

The Manager will maintain adequate supplies of PPE, cleaning materials, hand sanitiser, and other consumables recommended to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory infections at the Lodge.

The Manager will ensure staff and cleaners are trained in the correct use of PPE and maintain appropriate resources and services to correctly dispose of potentially contaminated PPE and other materials.

The Manager will engage qualified cleaners to undertake a Covid deep-clean if required.

### **6. Procedure for Preparedness**

- 6.1** The Manager will maintain records of the Covid-19 and Influenza vaccinations of all staff
- 6.2** Guests and carers will present a completed *Risk Assessment/Declaration Form* (Attachment 1). Staff will review and witness the signing of the form.
- 6.3** The Manager will maintain summary records of Covid-19, Influenza and RSV vaccination of all guests and carers.
- 6.4** The Manager will provide each guest who is suspected or confirmed as being infected with a pack comprising a thermometer, hand sanitiser, gloves, spray bottle of disinfectant and water to wipe their own door handles and surfaces.

### **7. Procedures for Response to Suspected or Confirmed Respiratory Infection**

- 7.1** If anyone develops symptoms of respiratory infection at the Lodge, the Manager will immediately isolate the person(s) to their room for 7 days. The Manager may assist them to visit a doctor.
- 7.2** The Manager will also advise people staying at the Lodge, newly arriving guests and carers and any other people who may have been exposed to infection at the Lodge during the previous 10 days.

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**7.3** The Manager will arrange for the person to be tested by Combination RAT. If the initial RAT is negative (ie day 1), the Manager will arrange RAT testing on days 2, 4 and 7 or may organise for the person to be tested by PCR at the closest testing centre.

**7.4** The Manager may reorganise accommodation and movements within the Lodge to minimize the contact with others, including only using external doors to verandahs.

**7.5** If a person at the Lodge exhibits symptoms of deteriorating health, such as breathing difficulties and dizziness, an ambulance will be called.

**7.6** If a respiratory infection is confirmed in a person at the Lodge, the Manager will take further immediate steps to minimise the risk of spread within the Lodge.

**7.7** If the Manager is advised that someone has been diagnosed with a serious respiratory infection within 7 days of leaving the Lodge, she will advise other people who may have been exposed at the Lodge.

### **8. Resource People**

CCW Spokespersons:

Mr Ricky Puata, Chairman, 0421 874 581/  
chair@cancercarewestern.org.au

Dr Jamie Gordon, 0428 814 836 / [j.gordon48@optusnet.com.au](mailto:j.gordon48@optusnet.com.au)

PHU Bathurst - (02) 6330 5880. After Hours 0428 400 526.

Central West Cancer Care Centre - Fran Ferguson, Rural Cancer Nurse  
Coordinator:  
(02) 6369 3967, 0429 397 931 [frances.ferguson@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:frances.ferguson@health.nsw.gov.au)

Orange Health Service - Dr Jake Williams, Infectious Diseases Physician:  
(02) 6365 7828 / [jacowilliams@csu.edu.au](mailto:jacowilliams@csu.edu.au)

McArdles Cleaning, Orange – Mark Mangune (02) 6361 8447/  
[mark@mcardles.com.au](mailto:mark@mcardles.com.au)

### **10. Revision History**

Relevant changes to this Policy will also be reflected in concurrent updates to the Visitor Policy.

Vs 2 - 11 October 2021

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Vs 3 – 17 January 2022  
Vs 4.2 – June 2022  
Vs 4.3 – January 2023  
Vs 4.4 – 25 July 2023  
Vs 4.5 – June 2023  
Vs 4.6 – 24 January 2024  
Vs 4.7 – July 2024  
Vs 4.8 – Oct 2024

### **11. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Documents**

**Attachment 1** – *Respiratory Infection Risk Assessment/Declaration for Guests and Carers*, Version 4.1 then as subsequently updated.

#### **Official Health Resources:**

##### ***Advice to residential aged care facilities (RACFs) 20 May 2024***

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/racf-latest-advice.asp>.

##### ***NSW respiratory surveillance - COVID-19 and influenza***

###### ***Latest surveillance summary***

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/reports.aspx>

##### ***COVID-19 vaccine advice and recommendations for 2024***

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination>

##### ***Q&As on combination rapid antigen self-tests***

<https://www.tga.gov.au/qas-combination-rapid-antigen-self-tests>

## RESPIRATORY INFECTION AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

**Guidance for residential aged care facilities on the public health management of acute respiratory infections (including COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus)**

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Documents/racf-ari-guidance.pdf>

### Commercial Links:

**TouchBio RSV, Flu A/B & COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test**

<https://touchaustralia.com.au/products/rsv-flu-covid-rapid-antigen-test-05>

## 12. Acknowledgements

Date Approved	30th October 2024
Approval Authority	Executive: Chairman
Signature	

**Respiratory Infection Risk Assessment/Declaration  
for Guests and Carers - Vs 4.3**

See separate document