



COVID-19 asymptomatic testing for aged care staff and residents of NSW residential aged care facilities

1/1/2021

Protecting vulnerable people

Australians living in aged care are among those most vulnerable to becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19. Stopping this virus from spreading into New South Wales aged care facilities is our top priority.

The Australian Government is supporting asymptomatic testing of staff and residents in residential aged care facilities in the following local government areas (LGAs): Inner West, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury Bankstown, Strathfield and Cumberland.

These areas have been prioritised for testing because of potential transmission risk.

Asymptomatic testing of aged care staff and residents gives health authorities the chance to find people with COVID-19, before they appear unwell. This helps health authorities identify where community transmission is happening, before there are COVID-19 outbreaks.

Asymptomatic testing will also help providers know the COVID-19 status of staff and residents on a given day. This may help providers know if someone is positive before further transmission occurs or a significant outbreak.

Douglass Hanly Moir (a subsidiary of Sonic Healthcare) will contact aged care services in the Inner West, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury Bankstown, Strathfield and Cumberland LGAs to offer asymptomatic testing.

Remember: COVID-19 tests are only a point in time indication of whether someone has the virus. Everyone working and living in aged care must:

- maintain good hygiene measures
- be alert to symptoms of COVID-19
- be retested if they become even mildly unwell.

Who will be conducting the asymptomatic testing?

Douglass Hanly Moir (a subsidiary of Sonic Healthcare). Testing teams will visit aged care facilities in the Inner West, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury Bankstown, Strathfield and Cumberland LGAs. The teams will collect specimens from every staff member and resident who agrees to a test and is at the facility on the day the teams visit.

The teams will also leave self-collect testing kits for staff who were unable to attend on the day of the team's visit.

Douglass Hanly Moir will test the collected specimens and provide the results to the requesting practitioner.

Douglass Hanly Moir will also inform the NSW Health of the results.

When will facilities be tested?

A clinical coordinator from Douglass Hanly Moir will contact your service directly and schedule in a suitable date and time for testing.

You will need to provide the clinical coordinators with:

- a list of all staff and residents who agree to a test
- their Medicare details
- the details of the requesting general practitioner.

What is the cost of asymptomatic testing?

There is no cost to residential aged care facilities, staff or residents for testing. The Australian Government is funding this asymptomatic testing.

The asymptomatic testing teams will supply their own personal protective equipment.

Do all residential aged care facilities in the nominated LGAs need to participate?

Testing is voluntary. We strongly encourage facilities to participate, particularly staff members because asymptomatic testing protects residents

It will help providers to know the COVID-19 status of staff at the facility on a given day. This will help providers know early if someone is positive, before further transmission occurs or a significant outbreak.

Who can be tested?

As staff are more likely to contract COVID-19 in the community, they are the priority for asymptomatic testing. A worker may include, allied health staff, cleaning and catering staff and others. However, residents may also agree to a test.

Will staff and residents need to isolate after being tested?

Staff and residents who feel well and don't have symptoms do not need to isolate after a test.

If they develop symptoms at any point, no matter how mild, they must stay at home and seek medical advice. It is important to note that tests are a point in time indication and a person's COVID-19 status could change on any given day.

If a resident has symptoms, or develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must follow the facility's COVID-19 protocols. This may include isolation until test results come back.

How will people find out their results?

Douglass Hanly Moir will test the specimens and will report positive COVID-19 results to NSW Health.

If there is a positive result, NSW Health will notify the person and aged care facility. It will also support aged care facilities to undertake contact tracing. Staff who have registered with a mobile number will receive negative results by text message.

If there is a positive result, NSW Health will arrange for follow up testing of all staff and residents.

What if my service has a COVID-19 outbreak?

If an aged care service has a COVID-19 outbreak, your Local Health District will arrange testing of residents and staff.

What will happen if someone presents for a test and appears unwell?

If a staff member feels unwell, or has symptoms of COVID-19, they must go home and seek further medical advice.

If a resident is unwell, facility's should follow their COVID-19 protocols which may include isolating the resident until tests results are back.

How can my services request COVID-19 testing outside of these arrangements?

Residential aged care facilities can contact Douglass Hanly Moir through their dedicated aged care facility COVID-19 Hotline on 1800 570 573.

Further information

More information is available on the NSW Health website:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/racf-latest-advice.aspx