

# COVID-19 and Palliative Care

## Exemption Fact Sheet for Residential Aged Care Facilities

Palliative Care Queensland (PCQ) is the peak body and leading charity for palliative care in Queensland. This factsheet was developed to support organisations and individuals to better understand the exemption process in relation to COVID-19 and palliative care in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs).

### PALLIATIVE CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Visitor restrictions have complicated the ability of RACFs to support residents through their end-of-life journey
- People at the end-of-life need support from family and loved ones and social connectedness
- Exclusion of family visitors and loved ones at end-of-life may remove a relatively minor risk for service providers but may cause acute suffering for residents who are dying, and long-term distress and complex grief issues for their families and loved ones
- Additional complexities are experienced if international visitors and people from COVID-19 hotspots are coming to be with a family member or loved one at the end-of-life
- For the most up to date guidance on RACF visitor restrictions in relation to COVID-19 follow this link to the current [Queensland Health Aged Care Direction](#)
- If you are an International traveller (requiring government quarantine) or an individual travelling from a declared COVID 19 hotspot and you wish to apply for an exemption to make an end-of-life visit to a family member or loved one in a RACF, please refer to the [Queensland Government Exemption Portal](#). Further information is available in the Queensland Health document [Guidance for persons in quarantine visiting residents receiving end-of-life care](#)
- There is a need for family, loved ones, RACFs and medical services to collaborate to ensure end-of-life visits can occur safely and compassionately

### TRIGGERS TO CONSIDER COMPASSION EXEMPTION

Family and loved ones should consider seeking an exemption for an end-of-life visit if any of the following triggers have been noted:

- There has been a significant functional or medical decline
- There is a sudden acute event
- Discussions around goals of care are required particularly around futile treatment
- Following hospitalisation<sup>1</sup>
- Last weeks or days of life (i.e. sometimes referred to as actively dying)

<sup>1</sup> ELDAC Care Model: Assessing Palliative Care Needs



# WHICH ADVICE TO FOLLOW

## For Residential Aged Care Facilities

If you would like additional advice for supporting a palliative care resident:

- Talk to the resident's GP
- Additional support and advice are available from your local Specialist Palliative Care Service (SPCS) or via contacting PallCRConsult 1300 725 527 ([www.pallconsult.com.au](http://www.pallconsult.com.au))
- Additional support for GPs is also available through your local SPCS or via contacting PallDrConsult 1300 725 537 ([www.pallconsult.com.au](http://www.pallconsult.com.au))

## For Family and Loved Ones

If you are coming from overseas or from a declared COVID-19 hotspot you may need to allow additional time to seek an exemption to enter Queensland for the purpose of an end-of-life visit. If you would like further information:

- Speak with your loved one's or family member's RACF Manager and/or their GP
- If you are still having issues or concerns, further assistance is available through the National Aged Care Advocacy Line (see number below)

## KEY SUPPORTS AND INFORMATION

For Families and Loved Ones	For Health Professionals
<b>Aged and Disability Advocacy</b> <a href="http://www.adaaustralia.com.au">www.adaaustralia.com.au</a> 1800 818 338 (Freecall) or 07 3637 6000	<b>End of Life Direction for Aged Care (ELDAC)</b> 1800 870 155 <a href="http://www.eldac.com.au">www.eldac.com.au</a>
<b>CareSearch</b> <a href="http://www.caresearch.com.au">www.caresearch.com.au</a>	<b>pallConsult</b> 1300 725 537 <a href="http://www.pallconsult.com.au">www.pallconsult.com.au</a>
<b>Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland</b> <a href="http://www.cotaqld.org.au">www.cotaqld.org.au</a> 07 3316 2999	<b>palliAGED</b> <a href="http://www.palliaged.com.au">www.palliaged.com.au</a>
<b>National Aged Care Advocacy Line</b> 1800 700 600	<b>Palliative Care Queensland</b> 07 3842 32 42 <a href="http://www.palliativecareqld.org.au">www.palliativecareqld.org.au</a>
<b>PalAssist</b> 1800 772 273 <a href="http://www.palassist.org.au">www.palassist.org.au</a>	<b>PEPA</b> <a href="http://www.pepaeducation.com">www.pepaeducation.com</a>
<b>Palliative Care Queensland</b> 07 3842 32 42 <a href="http://www.palliativecareqld.org.au">www.palliativecareqld.org.au</a>	
<b>Queensland Health</b> <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au">www.health.qld.gov.au</a>	If you are seeking clarification on a public health direction or an enquiry about an exemption or have any questions, please call 134 COVID (134 268)

PCQ believes in continuous improvement – if you have any feedback or suggestions for improving this factsheet, please email them to: [covid19@palliativecareqld.org.au](mailto:covid19@palliativecareqld.org.au)

PCQ would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this checklist, particularly the Palliative Care Response to COVID-19 Working Group and Queensland Health.

