

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians
Minister for Youth and Sport

17 July 2020

Menarock aged care residents transferred to hospital

The Australian Government is continuing to work closely with Victorian authorities and Menarock Life Aged Care to manage a COVID-19 outbreak at its service at Essendon.

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck, confirmed today all remaining residents would be transferred from the aged care facility to hospital.

“This is able to occur because the Australian Government partnered with the private hospital sector to ensure all resources, staff and beds were ready to support this response to the COVID-19 outbreak,” Minister Colbeck said.

“We understand this is a very stressful time, both for the residents being moved, and their families.

“However, we believe this is a necessary step to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the residents currently living in the Menarock Life facility.”

Minister Colbeck said decisions to transfer residents from residential aged care facilities to hospitals were made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual residents’ clinical care needs and preferences, the clinical and other advice of the experts helping to manage the outbreak, and the capacity of the facility to manage infection control.

“Due to the layout of the facility and the unique challenges of effectively isolating and grouping residents on site at Menarock Essendon, the decision was taken to transfer all residents to hospital,” Minister Colbeck said.

Twenty residents from this facility have already been transferred to Royal Melbourne hospital.

Sadly, two residents from Menarock have died.

Fifteen residents still being cared for at Menarock Life, Essendon and three residents at Royal Melbourne hospital, will now be moved into Healthscope’s La Trobe Private Hospital in Bundoora where they will be provided with the care and support they need during this stressful time.

La Trobe Private Hospital and other private hospitals in Melbourne will provide beds for aged care residents where on-site isolation and grouping cannot take place in residential facilities.

“I want to thank these private hospitals for standing with us to ensure we protect and look after residents during this stressful time,” Minister Colbeck said.

Healthscope CEO, Steven Rubic, said the dedicated and highly trained staff at La Trobe Private Hospital and will work to ensure these residents receive the best possible care.

“Our collaboration with both state and federal health authorities has been one positive aspect of this pandemic and we look forward to playing our role in the care of these residents,” Mr Rubic said.

Transferred residents will also receive follow-up testing for COVID-19 and be closely monitored for any signs and symptoms of the virus to ensure appropriate and timely clinical treatment can be provided.

To assist the service to respond to the outbreak, Menarock has received significant support from the Australian Government including the sourcing of an infection control specialist, personal protective equipment from the National Medical Stockpile, additional pathologists for COVID-19 testing and emergency surge workforce supplementation including a clinical first responder, registered and enrolled nurses, personal care workers and general practitioners.

“Protecting vulnerable people in residential aged care facilities from the threat of COVID-19 is our top priority. We will continue to work with state health authorities and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to support aged care providers in COVID-19 hotspots,” Minister Colbeck said.