



21 April 2020

## Dear family member,

I am writing to you in regards to COVID-19 directions issued by the Australian Government that require anyone visiting or entering an aged care home to be **vaccinated against influenza** (the flu) from **1 May 2020**.

Under the directives issued by all states and territories, combined with the decisions made by the National Cabinet, the Prime Minister of Australia announced on 18 March 2020, that all employees, visitors, health practitioners, contractors, volunteers and others must have an annual influenza vaccination.

As our nation faces the global COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination against influenza is particularly important this year. Like with COVID-19, older Australians, the people we are providing direct care to, are at the highest risk. Vaccination is the best way to reduce the risk of getting the flu and to help to protect the people we care for and the people around them against it.

In line with the government directives, as an aged care provider, Whiddon has an obligation to seek proof of annual immunisation from everyone, including both adults and children, who enter our aged care homes as of 1 May 2020. This evidence may include a statement or record from a GP or an immunisation statement from Medicare online, or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

This means that if you visit a Whiddon home from 1 May 2020, or after this date when visitor restrictions are safe to be relaxed, we will have a process in place to ensure that anyone entering our home has been vaccinated annually for influenza.

You will be required to bring evidence of **your 2020 influenza vaccination** to the care home and we will then provide you with a Whiddon vaccination record card that is signed by one of our team members, confirming they have sighted the relevant documentation. Please note that a copy of the evidence of your vaccination may be kept for administrative purposes and will be used to validate compliance with the government requirements.

The Whiddon vaccination record card is valid 12 months from the date of your vaccination, and you will need to show this card on subsequent visits to the care home. This will alleviate the need to show your documentation on each visit, making this more convenient for you.

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# Whiddon

If you cannot have the vaccination for valid medical reasons, we encourage you to discuss this with your GP and also contact the Coronavirus Helpline (1800 020 080) for advice on your options. Unfortunately we have no authority as an organisation to grant exemptions.

I understand that this is a challenging time for everyone and thank you for your understanding and cooperation with this important measure. I encourage you to speak with the Care Manager if you have any questions on any of the above and refer to the enclosed Department of Health fact sheet that offers further information.

Kind regards



Chris Mamarelis  
**Whiddon Chief Executive Officer**