FACT SHEET:   
MOBILE TESTING CLINICS - VICTORIA

20 July 2020

## Why are Mobile Testing Clinics testing residents and staff in residential aged care facilities that do not have a COVID-19 outbreak?

* Australians living in aged care are among those most vulnerable to becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19. Stopping this virus from spreading into Victoria’s aged care facilities is our top priority.
* Testing gives health authorities the chance to find people with COVID-19 who are living and working in aged care, before they appear unwell. This will help health authorities identify where community transmission is occurring, before there are COVID-19 outbreaks.
* Five new COVID-19 testing teams are testing staff and residents in residential aged care facilities (RACF) across metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire. Testing is voluntary.
* These teams are in addition to the in-reach pathology services deployed by the Australian Government to residential aged care services with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 outbreak.
* **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 testing?

* Aspen Medical COVID-19 Mobile Testing Clinics (MTC) will visit RACFs that have not reported positive COVID-19 cases.
* The MTC will collect specimens from every staff member and resident who agree to be tested. They will need to be at the RACF on the day the MTC visit.
* Sonic Healthcare will test the specimens collected by Aspen Medical and will provide the results to participants and the RACF.
* Sonic Healthcare will also inform the Victorian Public Health Unit if there is a positive result.

### Do all RACFs in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire need to participate?

* Participation in the MTC is voluntary; however, we strongly encourage RACFs to participate. Testing will help providers know the COVID-19 status of staff and residents at the facility on a given day. This may also help providers know if someone is positive before a significant outbreak or further transmission occurs.

### How will the RACF know when their service is being tested?

* An Aspen Medical Clinical Coordinator will call the RACF two days before arriving for testing. They will identify a point of contact in the service and organise a preliminary site visit for the day before testing.
* The Clinical Coordinator will email the RACF a registration spreadsheet.
* The Clinical Coordinator will visit the RACF the day before the MTC arrives to:
  + establish contact with senior management at the RACF
  + complete the registration of staff and residents who agree to be tested
  + identify two stations for testing (one for staff, and one for ambulatory residents)
  + determine how the stations will be set up (including personal protective equipment (PPE) donning and doffing stations)
  + identify non-ambulatory residents who will be tested in their rooms
  + investigate clinical waste management in RACF to facilitate MTC   
    waste management
  + identify appropriate areas for the MTC vehicles to park
  + communicate the needs of the MTC to the RACF staff so that they may provide appropriate support.

### What will happen on the testing day and how long will the tests take?

* The MTC will arrive on site at the agreed time and the Clinical Coordinator will accompany the team into the RACF testing areas.
* The MTC will provide PPE for its staff; the RACF will provide PPE for its residents and staff (surgical mask for test participants; gloves and surgical mask for staff who assist residents to the testing areas).
* All RACF staff will be tested at one designated testing station, one by one.
* All RACF residents will be tested at a second designated testing station, one by one.
* The RACF will need to provide two staff to:
  + escort ambulant residents from their rooms to the testing area
  + provide support for the resident through the process of testing
  + escort the resident to their room afterwards.
* A RACF staff member must also accompany, guide, and assist the GP in taking the samples from non-ambulatory residents in their rooms.
* All participants will be asked if they consent to being tested.
* The MTC will adhere to all environmental cleaning standards and supply its own cleaning materials.
* Every effort will be made to complete testing within one day. However the time to complete testing at a RACF will depend on the number of people being tested. The MTC staff will have a break after every four hours.

### What is the cost of testing?

* There is no cost to the facility or any participating resident or staff member. The Australian Government is fully funding this testing.

### What if a resident or staff member declines a test?

* Participation is voluntary. There will be no adverse outcomes for any resident or staff member who opts out of this testing program.
* Some staff may have been tested already. These staff may not wish to be retested. It is important to note that tests are only a point in time indication and a person’s COVID-19 status could change on any given day.

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

* If a staff member or resident is symptomatic, or becomes symptomatic, of COVID-19, they must follow the RACFs COVID-19 protocols. This may include isolation of residents until tests results are known. Staff may need to take sick-leave and isolate until test results are known.

### How will people find out their results?

* Sonic Healthcare will test the specimens and will report positive COVID-19 results directly to the Victorian Public Health Unit (PHU). The PHU are responsible for notifying the participant and RACF. The PHU will support the RACF to undertake contact tracing. See [First 24 hours](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/first-24-hours-managing-covid-19-in-a-residential-aged-care-facility) checklist for what to do if there is a positive result.
* The responsible clinical manager at the RACF will receive all results for residents and staff.
* Staff who have registered with a mobile number will receive negative results by text message.
* Staff who test positive will be contacted by a clinical practitioner from Sonic Healthcare.
* Staff and residents are not required to isolate while waiting for the results of the COVID-19 tests.
* However, staff should not attend work if they are feeling unwell, even mildly unwell, and wait for test result, or be retested.