



CovidCom met this morning; it was our 30th formal meeting, and on top of many informal meetings and telephone conversations held since the outbreak of the pandemic in our country in March 2020.

Recent Covid infections within MHA (residents and staff) peaked at 21 cases, but we have had no further cases since last reporting to you. We all know that this can change in a flash, and so we should all keep on doing what we need to do, to stay safe.

Globally there is continuing hype, some of it bordering on hysteria, regarding the Omicron variant. Within SA we are definitely in the fourth wave. Interestingly, the daily new Covid cases across the country peaked at 13449 in July 2020 (1st wave), 20999 in January 2021 (2nd), 22910 in July 2021 (3rd), and as of yesterday there were 23857 new cases. Some overseas countries are showing massive increases; winter plays a role in this, but there has been some reckless relaxations of safety rules. Overseas travel restrictions have just added to the misery, felt by tens of millions of people, across the world. We must, and will, continue to be optimistic, courageous, and look after one another.

What do you want for Christmas? According to a 1948 song: "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth", while a 1994 hit song told us: "All I want for Christmas is you"! Probably No.1 on your list to Santa this year is a plea to return us to some sort of normal; to get your lives back; to just be free again. CovidCom members know that some of this could be achieved by ensuring some 'normality' at Christmas time, but we are also mindful that a significant spike in infections and/or new Lockdown restrictions implemented by Government could undo all of this.

After much debate CovidCom decided that the following changes and arrangements will apply to CP Bradfield Frail Care (CPB), Maranatha Frail Care (MFC) and Bob Zeiss Bedsitters (BZB):

- Lockdown will be lifted at all three facilities during the period 09h00 on Friday 24 December to 16h00 on Sunday 26 December 2021, allowing residents to go out and to be with loved ones for a while
- Any resident wanting to go out at any time during this window period must make arrangements accordingly with the Sister on Duty (CPB: 041-3606474/MFC: 041-3652233). This will enable staff to keep track of movements, and for catering purposes
- Residents leaving MHA's facilities over the Christmas period will do so at their own risk
- Residents and their loved ones are urged to avoid large/public gatherings, and to ensure proper ventilation in any facility being visited

- Our Nursing Services Manager Sanet Marx will be on leave 16 December 2021 to 2 January 2022 inclusive. Matron Nelhari Windell will be standing in for her during this period, supported by our Professional Nurse/Counsellor Gillian le Roux.

CovidCom members wish all of our residents and staff across MHA, and the wider MHA family, a Blessed Christmas, a safe and joyous festive season, and God's protection now and in 2022. We may still be at War, but let us celebrate some Peace at this special time (apologies to Leo Tolstoy!!)

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #90: FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021

BREAKING NEWS/WARNING: COVID IS BACK

ANOTHER WEEK, ANOTHER BATTLE, SAME WAR

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in our country in March 2020, we have all done our best to keep the virus away from MHA. Rules and regulations and Lockdowns were put in place by Government and/or by CovidCom, and our residents and staff did everything expected of them, and more, in complying. The results of those decisions and that attitude paid huge dividends; during the period March to December 2020 we recorded 39 Covid-positive cases among residents, and 23 among staff, with almost no cases requiring hospitalization, and only 4 deaths. Then during the period January to November 2021 inclusive we recorded NO Covid infections within MHA.

Sadly, in the blink of an eye this has changed dramatically. Over the past weekend a village resident who was temporarily in Maranatha Frail Care (MFC) required hospitalization, and was tested Covid-positive on admission to hospital. MHA was informed of this on Sunday, and MFC was locked down, as a precaution. By 08h00 on Monday CovidCom had met, and decided that MFC should remain locked down. Owing to its proximity to Maranatha Village it was decided to lock down that facility too. All residents of the Village were tested for Covid, and all showed a negative result (as a result of the testing, the lockdown of Maranatha Village was lifted on Monday afternoon).

However, the Covid scenario in MFC, and now at CP Bradfield Frail Care (CPB) too, is changing; as of this morning a total of 8 residents and 10 staff have tested Covid positive. None has thus far showed any aggressive symptoms, but all Covid-positive residents are being confined to their rooms, and affected staff sent home. Staff on duty are wearing barrier nursing equipment, and the situation is being continuously monitored. The Department of Health has now given training to Matrons Marx and Windell to carry out rapid testing on site, and the necessary equipment has been provided. Testing has been done, and this improves our response time and our decision-making.

Rapid testing has also just been carried out on residents at Bob Zeiss Bedsitters (BZB); all results are negative. We needed some good news!

CovidCom reviewed our position again this morning, and the following decisions were taken:

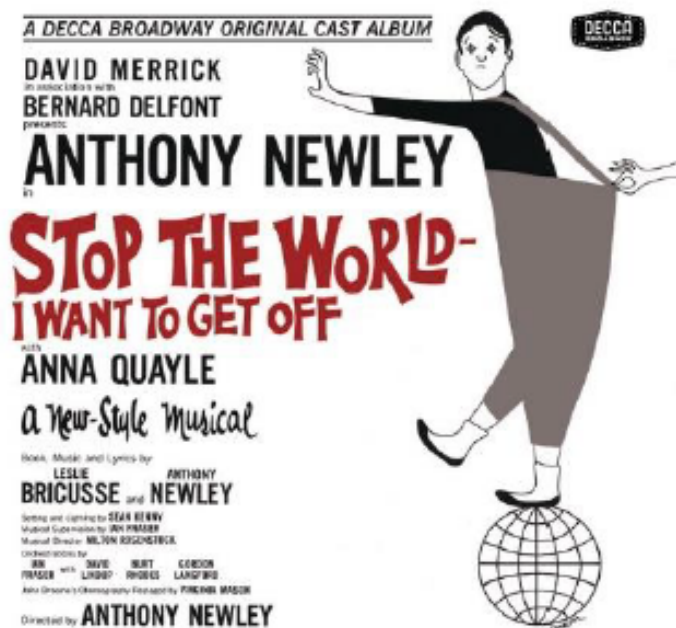
- Visitors are still allowed into CPB and BZB (existing arrangements apply)
- NO visitors are allowed into MFC
- Residents at CPB, BZB and MFC are 'locked in' i.e. cannot leave the premises
- CovidCom will review this on a daily basis (we are acutely aware that Christmas is a fortnight away)

This outbreak again demonstrates just how quickly Covid infection can occur, and how it can spread. It is virtually impossible to establish how and when an infection occurs (generally, not

just in this instance), and so we need to respond reactively as quickly as possible. Fortunately, CovidCom and our nursing staff are trained to put preventative measures in place at a moment's notice, and this is what has happened during this week. We must just hope, and pray, that the spread has been contained. The outbreak is also a stark reminder to all of us who make up the MHA family that Covid is still stalking us, day and night, and that we must continue to be vigilant. In this regard, please remain compliant with Government's and MHA's rules and regulations, and continue with mask-wearing, sanitizing, social distancing, and avoiding crowds irrespective of size.

Please continue to take special care of yourselves, and of those in your family or community.

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #89: WEDNESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2021
STOP THE WORLD—I WANT TO GET OFF!!!



This was the title of a successful stage musical in the 1960's. The title was allegedly borrowed from a piece of graffiti on a wall, but it gave birth to a slang phrase used ever since. In simple language it means: "Stop, I'm tired of this. I've had enough".

No one will blame you, or think less of you, if this describes how you're feeling right now. A second year having a killer virus in our midst. Another Christmas when we can't celebrate as we would wish. Another holiday period when family and friends can't take a proper break, and visit those they love in the way they used to. Yet another month when healthcare workers go to work in fear. Yet another month of Lockdown, in one form or another. No sooner had we sort of got our heads around SARS-CoV-2 (the latest COVID, discovered in 2019, hence the full title COVID-19) than we had to try to understand the variants Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and now Omicron. Enough already! Stop the world—I want to get off!!!

In every developed country across the globe there are teams of brilliant scientists (yes, especially in South Africa) who are finding ways to get us through this pandemic. Let us continue to have faith in them to develop new and better vaccines to protect us. Let us also be ever mindful of the service and sacrifice of our healthcare workers; brilliant doctors, dedicated nursing staff, and everyone who enables them to do what they do best. The world won't stop, and they'll make sure that we stay safely on board!

CovidCom met yesterday. There was serious debate and discussion about the Omicron variant which has caused such havoc in the past week or more. It was not the forum for moaning about the rash decisions around air travel, but instead we concentrated on what our State President said (or didn't say) in his address on Sunday night, and we discussed the rising infection numbers in our country, especially in Gauteng. We must all bear in mind that Gautengers are going to descend on our city over the next six weeks, having a holiday or visiting friends and family here (including many in the MHA family). The risk of a significant spike in infections is real. CovidCom will monitor this, and meet again in a week's time. It was decided that no changes should be made now to our rules and regulations; any tightening or loosening will depend on how the Covid monster moves. Science and signs will inform us on the best way forward.

We are acutely aware that many residents and their loved ones want to make plans around Christmas; this is a dilemma facing families and communities across the world. Let us pray that governments and others in positions of authority across the world won't be called upon to impose any harsh measures.

Please continue to take special care of yourselves, and of those in your family or community.

Malcolm Stewart

CovidCom Chairman (and on behalf of the Board, Management, our staff, and CovidCom)