



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

8 April 2020

### **Welfare checks to ensure the wellbeing of Senior Australians**

Welfare checks will be conducted on Senior Australians who have elected to defer aged care home services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians Richard Colbeck said home care recipients who had suspended services to avoid the risk of contracting the virus would now receive phone calls to ensure their wellbeing.

“We don’t want people to fall through the cracks,” Minister Colbeck said.

“Elderly people who receive home care visits are often extremely vulnerable.

“It’s clear some Senior Australians are anxious about the risks of visits from providers.

“Of course, it’s their choice to receive or not receive care – but we remain determined to ensure those who need support are still receiving it.”

Minister Colbeck said it was another measure to ensure Senior Australians received the support they needed during a difficult time.

“Care providers are trained in infection control to help stop the spread of coronavirus and protect clients in their care,” he said.

“All the proper procedures are being put in place to ensure the highest level of protection.”

Minister Colbeck said the Australian Government is working with a number of consumer organisations – including the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) - to provide the additional supports.

“From today, OPAN will be able to receive referrals from home care and CHSP providers where the client or their family are reducing or cancelling services due to concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic,” Minister Colbeck said.

He said referrals could also be made for people needing extra support as a result of the restrictions.

“The aged care provider has a responsibility to notify the care recipient or family of the referral to OPAN and that they will receive a call-back,” Minister Colbeck said.

“The welfare of people in care is our absolute priority and I’m determined to ensure they can continue to access the services they need.”

Senior Australians who need support with aged care advocacy can contact OPAN on 1800 700 600.

A video with tips on how to assist Senior Australians during this difficult time can be found [here](#).

Additional information and resources can be found [here](#).