



## STATE OF WASHINGTON

### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Washington Veterans Home • 1141 Beach Drive E • Port Orchard, Washington 98366 • (360) 895-4700*

April 2, 2020

To all Residents, Family Members and Employees of Washington Veterans Home,

I am sending this update out to everyone in an effort to provide each of you with the very latest updates and activities at the Washington Veterans Home. Uncertainty regarding the pandemic and the constant way it has overtaken every aspect of our lives both personally and professionally has caused considerable stress and ambiguity in all our lives.

I want to personally express my heartfelt thanks to all of our heroic staff here at the facility. Their continued commitment to safeguarding the lives and health of our residents while balancing their personal and professional commitments is truly epic.

#### Staff and Screening

In addition to daily screening including standard questions and a temperature check, we have added a secondary level of screening of our employees and service providers. This second step allows our clinical staff to assist with decisions on whether to allow employees and other essential service providers to continue on to their appointed shift using a sound and well-defined decision tree. It also gives our clinical team a chance to answer any questions the employee may have on the decision and what other steps they might want to take.

COVID-19 tests and results are reported on our website at [www.dva.wa.gov/covid](http://www.dva.wa.gov/covid). This site is updated as frequently as we receive results. If a staff member is tested for COVID-19, they will not return to work until test results are received. If a staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, they will return to work only under one of the following conditions:

- a negative test; or
- documentation from a physician releasing the employee to work; or
- documentation from a County health department releasing the employee to work.

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

We are still experiencing challenges in obtaining the recommended quantities of PPE as is everyone in the healthcare field. We have sufficient supplies on hand for the immediate future and continue to scour any and all resources for further stock. If you have knowledge of possible resources for PPE supplies please let us know.

Manufacturers and volunteers of all types are stepping up to provide resources such as face masks, face shields, full-length washable isolation gowns, and other equipment. We are grateful for the community's response.

### Clinic and Clinical Leadership

Under the direction of our nursing management staff and our physicians, we have been able keep up with the ever-changing information we are receiving from federal, state and local health departments. They continue to do a masterful job of providing us with the best direction and leadership possible.

We are in the process of freeing up a few beds in one of our hallways to serve as an isolation area should we have the need. We will be training a group of staff and support personnel in a more intensive fashion to care for residents who may need to be placed in this area. I want to thank the residents and their family members whom we have had to temporarily relocate to other rooms in order for us to make this happen. Your understanding and willingness to cooperate has been a great help in expediting this plan. I should also say that all of our staff are constantly being trained and re-trained in all the necessary areas of infection control and disease prevention.

### Activities and Visitors

The "No Visitors" rule remains in effect for an indeterminate length of time; however, we are working hard to connect residents to their family members using video and phone calls.

Our Activity Department has fully activated virtual visits to provide residents and family an opportunity to connect via the internet. We have been averaging 5 plus visits per day and hope to expand on this opportunity as time and equipment allow. If you would like more information on scheduling a time to virtually visit with your loved one, please feel free to contact Tami Reuter at 360 895-4376.

Resident activities are being provided through smaller group activities that meet the 6-foot social distancing requirement, and through some innovative restructuring of all-time favorites such as in room bingo and smaller and more frequently scheduled group activities for exercise and other activities. We thank all of you for your inquiries as to how you can help the residents during this time and I believe the activities department has been able to get a number of creative ideas from many of you.

### Dietary

Our meal service has been restructured with the majority of our residents receiving and eating meals in their rooms. The dining areas are still used to serve residents who require assistance and supervision during the meal times. Ancillary staff have been scheduled to each unit for each meal to help assure that the meal trays are delivered timely to help assure that the food remains at the correct temperatures. The dietary staff have done a wonderful job of adapting each time a change in service must be implemented.

Our dietary supervisor asked to me let everyone know that the springtime menus revisions are in the works and will come out very soon.

### Facility Maintenance

Our Housekeeping, Maintenance and Laundry departments have also stepped up in assuring that our facility, equipment and linen are kept clean and sanitized. We have added additional hours to the housekeeping team in order to stay on top of continuous disinfections of all of the most commonly touched surfaces within the building along with the daily cleaning, sanitation, and repair routines that they provide.

Administration

Our Administration team continues to provide outstanding customer service, answering calls and delivering mail and packages from families and friends. The veterans benefits specialists continue to connect veterans to earned benefits and compensation, while the cashier processes payments and updates the Resident Trust accounts.

All of our staff in all of our departments are doing an outstanding job of adapting and moving forward. It truly takes a village of people in every department who are willing to step up bravely and assist when called upon. I could not be prouder of the staff and I am glad to have the opportunity to work with all of them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George Wiemerslage". The signature is written in a cursive style.

George Wiemerslage, Administrator  
Washington Veterans Home  
Department of Veterans Affairs