



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Washington Soldiers Home, 1301 Orting Kapowsin Hwy E • Orting, Washington 98360

Serving Those Who Served

December 24, 2020

Dear Soldiers Home Residents, Families and Family Representatives:

As we continue our COVID-19 testing, we have identified eight additional resident and one additional staff member diagnosed with COVID-19 since our last message. The residents are in isolated rooms and being monitored closely by our care teams. They are asymptomatic and doing well. Staff are wearing appropriate PPE in this area and throughout the entire nursing care facility.

All residents at the Soldiers Home will be retested every 5-7 days until 14 days have passed without a new positive resident. Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place and we will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for residents for the next 14 days.

We continue working with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department to determine next steps with regard to additional measures. We also are following guidance from CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are safeguarding our residents and staff.

Staff will continue to monitor whether they have any symptoms, including the presence of a fever. As part of our ongoing screening process, all staff are screened upon arrival at work each day. This process includes a series of questions around whether symptoms are present and a temperature check. In addition, staff are asked to report any symptoms that occur after coming to work.

The Soldiers Home is following guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which requires regular testing of all long-term care facility staff. Currently the rate of positivity in Pierce County requires staff to be tested once each week. This may result in the identification of asymptomatic carriers, but is an important tool in defending against COVID-19.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you would prefer to receive these messages more quickly via email, please provide your email address to romyr@dva.wa.gov or call 360-893-4501.

VACCINE INFORMATION:

With news of the COVID-19 vaccine being shipped and administered to health care providers and long-term care facility residents, we also want to provide an update on how the Washington State Veterans Homes are participating in the vaccine process. The WDVA Veterans Homes Program has registered for the Operation Warp Speed Pharmacy Partnership Program. Through this program, residents and staff will receive one of the vaccine series authorized for administration through Walgreens. Our partners at Walgreens will set up a vaccine clinic in our Home where both residents and staff, who have signed consents, will be vaccinated. **This opportunity is provided now because we are in Phase 1a of the WA State Vaccine Distribution Plan. If a resident or staff person declines the vaccine as part of the Phase 1a distribution, it could be several months before it is available again.**

At this time, we do not have details regarding the dates of immunization or the specific product that will be administered; however, as soon as we have details from our Walgreens representatives, we will share this information with you.

One of the requirements to receive the vaccine is a consent form. If you are a family member or representative that holds POA for your resident you should have received a consent form. If your resident is unable to self-consent, please fill in the name field, section B2, sign and return this to us ASAP! If you need a new copy, it can be found online at:

<https://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Walgreens%20COVID-19%20LTCF%20VAR%2012.08.2020.pdf>

You can find out more about Operation Warp Speed by visiting:

<https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html>

In an effort to provide information as quickly and accurately as possible, we have developed a website to provide information to families and resident representatives,

<https://www.dva.wa.gov/covid>.

Sincerely



Robert Pence, Administrator