



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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

May 14, 2020

Dear Washington Veterans Home Residents, Family or Representative,

This will be my final communication to you as the acting Administrator at the Washington Veterans Home. The attached letter will be to introduce the facility's permanent full-time administrator, William McElya who will be corresponding with you in the future. It has been my honor and privilege to work on behalf of our veterans, spouses and family members during this critical time. I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your understanding and cooperation. Best of luck to all in the future.

George Wiemerslage
Outgoing Administrator

Hello,

I would first like to say thank you to our heroic team of employees for the selfless services they continue to display toward our veterans in these challenging times. I would also like to thank the Department of Veteran Affairs for the opportunity to continue with my promise of service to the veterans here at the Washington Veterans Home. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many of you during my tours, residents counsel, and in many of our early introductions. It is truly an honor to be here and have the ability to serve you.

William McElya BSNS MBA LNHA
ARMY

COVID-19 Update:

Thank you all for cooperating with us since we have installed the checkpoint station on the driveway. Our clients in the transitional housing program (building 10) have been such a great resource to us in manning our screening stations within the nursing home, serving as security staff to assist you in assuring that your packages and personal items for our residents are delivered promptly and in assisting us during our meal service times. Over 700 COVID-19 tests have been administered not only the residents but also to all of our staff members. As of today, I am happy to report that not a single test has come back positive. Moving forward until such time as the restrictions are eased or lifted, our attention and effort will now be at keeping the virus away from our doors at all costs. While there is still no guarantee of this, we will continue to do everything possible in order to minimize the possibility of a contaminating event occurring.

Activities:

As you might have seen on the news last week, Joint Base Lewis McChord conducted a C-17 Globemasters flyover of many of the hospital and health care facilities in Western Washington to show their thanks and support of our heroic staff on the front lines. We were able to get a large number of residents outside on a very pleasant warm and sunny day to watch the fly-over and wave some colorful red, white and blue paper for the pilots to see. While the event was brief, I believe the veterans enjoyed the opportunity to say thank you to the flyers.



Also, I am happy to report that pastor Ron has once again rejoined our staff and will be here Monday through Friday of every week to provide spiritual and emotional support for the residents and staff. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to open up the chapel for services as the social distancing requirements remain in place.

Our Memorial Day observances will also be modified this year. Because the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order remains in effect, which includes prohibiting gatherings and restrictions on attendance at funeral/cemetery services, we will not hold our annual Memorial Day Observance in the Chapel and we will not be asking community volunteers to assist with the placement of the flags in the cemetery. We will ensure that flags are placed. We are also planning a static display in honor of all of our residents who have passed away this year.

Maintenance:

We are asking that should you be preparing to purchase a new TV for you loved one, please do not exceed a 42-inch screen limit. Our TV stands measure 36" in length – therefore, nothing larger than a 42" TV can sit securely on it. If you want/need there to be a little room on either side of the TV stand for other items, the width should not be more the 40 inches.

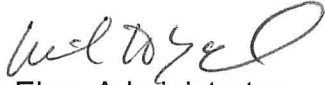
Also, before any electrical appliances are purchased for residents – those items need to be approved prior and not all appliances are acceptable.

Thank you again for all of your support, cooperation and kind responses to the letters. I am looking forward to the day when I can meet each of you personally.

We will continue to provide regular updates here and on our website at: www.dva.wa.gov/covid. If you have questions, please contact us at 360-895-4700 with any questions or concerns you may have.

We are here to serve your loved one and you as best we can through these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William McElya".

William McElya, Administrator
Washington Veterans Home
Department of Veterans Affairs

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George Wiemerslage".

George Wiemerslage