



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Walla Walla Veterans Home

92 Wainwright Drive • Walla Walla, Washington 99362 • 509-394-6800

Dear Resident Family or Representative,

First, I'd like to say thank you! Thank you for your understanding and most of all your patience as we work together to keep everyone associated with our Home safe and healthy. We know that this is a marathon, not a sprint, and we're in this together for the long-haul. Your words of kindness and appreciation are truly inspirational and help keep our entire Team's spirits up! We wanted to reach out to give you an update on how things are going at the Walla Walla Veterans Home, as we head into our seventh month of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and share information about other changes at the Home.

Topics of discussion are as follows:

- COVID-19 testing results
- Leadership team announcement
- Visitor booth visitations
- Holiday leave
- Flu season

COVID-19 Testing Results:

Since our last letter to you on October 12, residents, in Houses affected by staff who were diagnosed with COVID-19, have been tested twice for COVID-19. I'm happy to report that all tests have returned with negative results. All staff continue to be tested on a weekly basis. This regular staff testing, when combined with daily screening of all staff members and providers, wearing personal protective equipment at all times, frequent handwashing, frequent cleaning of services, and using social distancing, will help us keep your loved one safe and healthy.

Leadership Team Announcement:

I also want to share some news about our leadership team. Danny Knapp, the WWVH Home Administrator, has taken a leave of absence. In order to ensure we have the right leaders available to serve your resident and your family, we are temporarily appointing Lonna Leno as the Designee-Interim Nursing Home Administrator for WWVH. Lonna has been with the WWVH since its opening as the Admissions Coordinator and Veterans Benefits Specialist. She has more than 20 years of managerial experience in nursing care facilities and medical centers. Lonna was formerly licensed in the State of Oregon as a nursing home administrator and is in the process of obtaining her license in the State of Washington. While this process takes place, a temporary Licensed Nursing Home Administrator will also be identified. This individual will be on-site for several months to lead the WWVH through these transitions. More information and introductions will be shared soon!

Visitor Booth Visitations:

We know that the visitor restrictions have been extremely hard on everyone. With the change in weather, our outdoor cube visits will soon be suspended. We are working to provide an indoor visiting space so that we can resume in-person visits. More information will be shared as we receive new guidance on how to ensure everyone's health and safety during these visits. In the meantime, we are doing everything we can to make the outdoor visitor booth as comfortable for residents and families as we can.

Holiday Leave:

The holidays are approaching and families may be contemplating whether bringing their loved-one home for a day or weekend might be possible. Unfortunately, the stark reality is that being in a car, living room, or dining room with family and friends increases the risk of a resident being exposed to an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19. We know that no one would do this on purpose, but the risk is real and the consequences of a decision to leave for a few hours could have life changing impacts to everyone in the Walla Walla Veterans Home. For these reasons, if a resident chooses to leave the facility during the holidays, they will be placed on a 14-day mandatory quarantine upon their return. During the quarantine period, they will not be permitted to leave their room and will be cared for by staff in full PPE including; gown, gloves, procedure mask, eye protection/face shield. Since the declaration of the COVID-19 Pandemic, our collective efforts have focused on keeping this terrible virus out of our Home. I am very concerned that visits outside the Home over the holidays have the potential to un-do everything we've achieved so far. If you were planning a visit outside the Home over the holidays, we ask you to please reconsider. Our activities teams will work with you to ensure we can accommodate as many virtual, booth, and window visits as possible. In addition, we are waiting for guidance from the Governors Safe Start Plan regarding indoor visits. Once that is received, we will modify our visiting cubes to fit indoor locations that meet these requirements and be back in touch with you to schedule indoor in-person visits

Flu Season:

And finally, flu season is now upon us. We are making flu shots available to all residents and staff, and we encourage you to get your flu shot as well!

Closing Remarks:

I want to assure you that the Walla Walla Veterans Home Team is serving your resident with the utmost care and compassion. These dedicated individuals have not wavered in their commitment to your loved one. We are asking our own staff to be safe and only gather with their household members over the holidays as well. We all have difficult choices ahead of us and I am confident that by sticking together we will have opportunities to make Holiday memories that keep everyone happy and healthy. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Lonna Leno – Designee Interim Administrator
Walla Walla Veterans Home