

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



November 23, 2020

Orting: Today we received confirmation that one of our employees at the Washington Soldiers Home was diagnosed with COVID-19. This employee predominately works in the administration building, has worn proper PPE at all times when in the presence of other staff or residents, and the employee is now self-isolated at home.

We want to reassure residents, staff and family members that we are working closely with the Pierce County Regional Health District and following guidance from CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are taking every possible precaution.

Based on positive rates in Pierce County, staff will continue to be proactively tested each week, until CMS guidance recommends moving to monthly testing.

Additional environmental cleaning took place in areas that the staff member worked and the Washington Soldiers Home will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for the two residents that the employee had brief contact with, for the next 14 days.

We are asking our staff to pay close attention to 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 will take their temperature at least twice a day and are also asked to report any symptoms that occur after coming to work.

The Washington Soldiers Home, is following guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service, which requires regular testing of all long-term care facility staff. This may result in the identification of asymptomatic carriers, but is an important tool in defending against COVID-19.

We are notifying residents, staff and family representatives via email or letter and a post to the website. We have informed employees of their possible exposure in the workplace but we will maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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> Media inquiries should be addressed to heidia@dva.wa.gov.

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