

# Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



**May 19, 2020**

Port Orchard – We received confirmation that one of our employees at the Washington Veterans Home was diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee is now self-isolated at home.

We realize this news is concerning and we want to reassure residents, staff and family members that we are working closely with the Kitsap Public Health District and following guidance from CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are taking every possible precaution. We will stay in contact with the employee to ensure they get the care they need.

The Washington Veterans Home will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for residents in the affected units for the next 14 days. Staff in the affected units will also wear procedure masks when providing resident care. Staff have been wearing cloth masks at all times in the Veterans Home since April 15 in an effort to prevent an asymptomatic carrier from inadvertently sharing the virus. In addition, staff and residents in the affected units will be re-tested for Covid-19.

Additional environmental cleaning took place in areas that the staff member worked. We are in the process of notifying all residents and staff who had close or direct contact with the employee.

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.

We know that this news is difficult to hear and want to reassure residents, families and staff that we are doing everything within our power to keep them safe and healthy.

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](mailto:heidia@dva.wa.gov).

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