



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington Soldiers Home, 1301 Orting Kapowsin Hwy E • Orting, Washington 98360
Sewing Those Who Sewed

June 3, 2020

Dear Resident Family or Representative:

We are writing today in our continued effort to keep you informed on what is happening at the WA Soldiers Home.

As Counties move into different phases in the Governor's Safe Start Plan, our Home will receive guidance from the local health department on what re-opening looks like in our County. Please remember that in addition to the County guidance, the WA Soldiers Home will also follow guidance from the Governor's Office, Department of Social and Health Services, and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. We will share information with you as it is available, but ask for your continued patience as our plan may look slightly different than other nursing homes in the area. Our ultimate goal remains keeping COVID-19 out of our Home and it will take our continued efforts for us to be successful.

At this time, restrictions on Visitors in Nursing Homes remain in place. It is still unclear when and how the restrictions will be lifted, but we do know that in order to protect the health and safety of your resident and our staff, it will be a slow and deliberate process. We know that the continued isolation has been hard on all of our residents. For those of you who regularly participate in virtual visits, please continue to do so. The interaction is incredibly beneficial for your loved one and really improves their emotional well-being. The WA Soldiers Home has facilitated over 164 virtual visits, and this doesn't include those residents who are communicating with their loved ones without needing our assistance! If you would like to schedule a virtual visit, please contact Terry Nisbet at 360-893-4511 or via her cellphone at 253-310-1441.

Below is an update on our continued efforts to keep residents and staff safe:

- Daily **screening** of every employee or contractor who enters the nursing care building. In addition to temperature checks, employees are asked a series of questions to determine whether they have symptoms of COVID-19 or are able to report to work.
- Constant **cleaning** of frequently touched surfaces. Our custodial teams are working around the clock using disinfecting sprays, wipes, and will even be adding ultraviolet lights technology to keep our Home clean. Their work is critical to stopping COVID-19.

- Wearing appropriate **personal protective equipment** when providing care. Our PPE supplies are good thanks to the incredible work of our Home and Central Office procurement staff. When one of our four Homes has a need for a particular item, we have been able to share PPE to ensure all of our staff and residents are protected.
- **Testing** of any residents or staff with symptoms. The State Veterans Homes have completed our baseline testing required of all nursing homes in Washington State; however, we will continue to test residents with symptoms and require staff to be tested by their healthcare provider or local health authority.

Each of our four Veterans Homes has experienced some level of COVID-19 and we understand clearly how important our preventive work is.

I am pleased to report that at the WA Soldiers Home only one resident tested positive on the initial screening. However, the subsequent tests were negative. We have tested all our residents, staff and therapy contractors. One contracted staff who was asymptomatic tested positive. The staff was immediately sent home and contract tracing initiated. Our Home was able to participate in the creation of a virtual message for the Spokane residents and staff, you can view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7PUKRXE48U>.

As our COVID-19 journey continues, we will continue sending information and updates. Should you have questions or concerns along the way, please feel free call me at 360-819-3323 or email me at RobertP@dva.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Pence', with several horizontal strokes underneath.

Robert Pence, Administrator
WA Soldiers Home
WA State Department of Veterans Affairs