



STATE OF WASHINGTON

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Walla Walla Veterans Home**

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

Dear Walla Walla Veterans Home Residents, Families and Resident Representatives:

We hope you enjoyed the Holidays and were able to connect with your Resident virtually to share some time together.

As we continue to provide updates on our COVID-19 testing and results, we are writing to let you know that over the weekend, one of our WWVH team members was diagnosed with COVID-19. The employee is self-isolating at home.

All residents in the affected areas will be tested and retested every 5-7 days until 14 days have passed without a new resident positive. Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place and the Walla Walla Veterans Home will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for residents in the affected areas for the next 14 days.

We are working with the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health and following guidance from CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are safeguarding our residents and staff.

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 are asked to report any symptoms that occur after coming to work.

The Walla Walla Veterans Home, is following guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service, which requires regular testing of all long-term care facility staff, currently the rate of positivity in Walla Walla County requires staff to be tested twice each week. This may result in the identification of asymptomatic carriers, but is an important tool in defending against COVID-19.

We also want to remind you that our first Vaccine Clinic is scheduled for December 31, 2020. A second clinic will be scheduled about 3 weeks later DATE to provide the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose for those who were vaccinated at the first clinic, and provide first doses to those who weren't available on the first date. Our third clinic will be scheduled for about three weeks after the second clinic to

provide 2<sup>nd</sup> doses only. If a resident misses the first 2 clinics, we don't know when they will have an opportunity to get the vaccine so it is very important that we get consent forms back for everyone wishing to be vaccinated.

If you are a family member or representative that holds POA for your resident you should have received a consent form. ***If your resident is unable to self-consent, Please return this to us ASAP!*** If you need a new copy, it can be found online at: [www.dva.wa.gov/covid](http://www.dva.wa.gov/covid).

We will be receiving the Pfizer vaccine which is given in two steps, 21 days apart. The only contraindication to the vaccine is relative and includes a history of severe reaction to another vaccine. Side effects tend to be mild and include arm pain, a warm lump at the vaccine site, achiness and fatigue. Some people get a temporary low grade fever. Side effects tend to be most common in the week following the second injection. If a person gets side effects, it does not mean that something is wrong, it only means that the vaccine is doing its job and your body is mounting an effective immune response.

This vaccine has been shown to be over 95% effective at preventing COVID-19 infection in those studied.

You can learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine at:

- [Vaccine Information :: Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Washington State Vaccine Distribution Plan](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC](#)

Here are three important facts about the vaccine and how it works that the Department of Health wants you to know:

- The vaccine helps get your immune system activated so if you are exposed to the virus, your body is prepared.
- The vaccine helps your body make a plan to fight off the virus. After the vaccine, your body begins to make antibodies that will stay in your blood as protection in case the virus tries to invade. This allows your body to fight off the virus without you having to get sick first.
- When enough people have enough antibodies to fight off the virus, it has nowhere to go. For WA that means that if 70% of our population is vaccinated, we will be on the winning side of this pandemic and the spread will be contained.

We wish you Happy Holidays and want to thank you for your continued support! If you have questions regarding the vaccine clinic, please contact us at (509)394-6800.

Sincerely,  
Victor Odiakosa  
WWVH Interim Administrator