



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Walla Walla Veterans Home

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December 14, 2020

Today we are writing to provide updates on resident and staff COVID-19 test results.

Over the weekend, we received a positive COVID-19 lab result for one of our Walla Walla Veterans Home residents. The resident is asymptomatic and is being monitored closely. Our team has placed the resident on isolation and they are wearing appropriate PPE and using all appropriate precautions.

Because the resident was asymptomatic, staff immediately re-tested the resident using the point of care rapid test and this test result was negative. The point of care rapid tests are 98 – 100% accurate in providing negative results. Our team also performed a second PCR lab test today and will work with the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health to determine what additional steps should be taken.

We also want to update you on the message sent on Friday, December 11 regarding an employee who tested positive using the point of care rapid test. We performed a follow-up PCR lab test and this result confirmed a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

Another employee, who does not work in the Houses or nursing care areas, received a positive COVID-19 diagnosis through a PCR lab test. The staff member has not worked at the facility since their time of exposure.

And a separate employee received a positive result using the point of care rapid test.

All residents at WWVH 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 Walla Walla County Department of Community Health to determine next steps with regard to additional measures and proactive testing. We also are 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.

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>.

Victor Odiakosa
Interim Administrator