

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



January 4, 2021

Orting: It is with profound sadness that the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting shares the passing of two Residents, on January 2 and January 3, 2021. These Veterans were diagnosed with COVID-19 and sadly passed away, either from the effects of COVID-19 or due to other medical conditions that were present prior to the COVID-19 diagnosis.

“We offer our condolences to their families and we share their sense of loss of these brave heroes,” said Soldiers Home Administrator Robert Pence. “It is never easy to say goodbye to our Soldiers Home family members, but it is even harder under these circumstances.”

Facility-wide testing continues at the Soldiers Home and as a result, four additional residents and three additional staff have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Staff members continue to closely monitor all residents and to isolate COVID-19 positive residents. Staff diagnosed with COVID-19, are self-isolating at home. In addition, we are in close contact with the Department of Health Infection Preventionist as well as the Tacoma-Pierce County Health District to determine whether there are additional steps that can be taken to prevent further spread of the virus.

Staff will continue to monitor whether they have any symptoms, including the presence of a fever. As part of the daily screening process, all staff are screened upon arrival at work. 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 Soldiers Home, is following guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which requires regular testing of all long-term care facility staff. Currently the rate of positivity in Pierce County requires staff to be tested once each week. This may result in the identification of asymptomatic carriers, but is an important tool in defending against COVID-19.

The WDVA Veterans Homes Program has registered for the Operation Warp Speed Pharmacy Partnership Program. Through this program, residents and staff will receive one of the vaccine series authorized for administration. The Soldiers Home vaccine clinic is set for January 7. More information on Operation Warp Speed is available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html>

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>.

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