



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

March 24, 2021

Dear Veterans Home Residents, Families and Resident Representatives:

We are writing with updates on the Visitor Procedures for our State Veterans Homes program, as well as to provide an update on COVID-19 testing at the Soldiers Home. Over the weekend, a non-direct care staff member tested positive for COVID-19. Staff is now isolating at home according to DSHS guidelines. Staff was wearing appropriate PPE in the Nursing Facility and did not have direct contact with residents. The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department is aware and has determine that additional resident testing is not needed at this time. All Soldiers Home staff continue to be tested on a weekly basis, and our last round of testing was completed on 3/18/2021.

We have now passed the one-year mark of our agency implementing mandatory restrictions on visitors and other changes to comply with COVID-19 prevention measures. We know the strain on residents and families has been significant and look forward to helping family and friends reunite; however, **we want to remind everyone that our campus remains closed to all unscheduled visits.** This includes people who have received vaccines.

Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new visitation guidance for long term care facilities. Because facilities must always follow the most restrictive guidance from state or local health entities, we had to wait until the modifications to the Safe Start for Long Term Care Plan were released to modify our current process.

Below is information on how we are implementing the Resident Visitor and Compassionate Care Visitor guidelines and attached is the new [WDVA Visitor Agreement](#), which must be filled out by all visitors prior to entering the Nursing Care Building.

Please note that implementing these visits will take some time. Below are several of the safeguards we will take to ensure the safety and security of residents and staff, a full list is included in the [visitor agreement](#):

- All Resident Visits and Compassionate Care Visits will be scheduled for specific start and stop times to ensure all residents are able to receive a visitor as soon as feasible.
- The number of visits allowed each day will be limited by the total number of visitors allowed in the building at a time to allow for social distancing, as well as the capacity of our staff members to schedule appointments and follow the guidelines established in the Safe Start Plan.
- For regular resident indoor visits, a maximum of two adults and two children will be permitted; however, all visitors (including children) must be able to properly wear all required PPE.
- For regular indoor visits, either the resident or all of the visitors must be vaccinated. If they are not vaccinated, only outdoor visits are permitted.
- We will offer COVID-19 testing for visitors, as long as we have adequate testing supplies.
- Indoor visits can take place in resident rooms that do not have a roommate. For residents that share a room indoor visits can be conducted in the conference room at the end of wing two.
- Visitors will be screened at the entrance of the facility, provided education and the visitor agreement to sign.

We thank you in advance for your patience and invite you to reach out to Robert Pence at 360-893-5621 or Tena Chevalier at 360-893-4529 if you have questions or concerns about either Compassionate Care or Essential Support Person visits.

Additional information is located in the WDVA Visitor Agreement. Please review [this](#) document if you are interested in learning more about it. Our Social Work team will be working with residents' schedule visits, and our care teams will continue to evaluate the need for Compassionate Care visits based on resident needs. Please contact Suzette Hollowell at 360-893-4564 to schedule Gazebo visits and inquiries about indoor visits, indoor visits will be an option very soon

Thank you in advance for your patience as we embark on this new opportunity to allow for more personal interaction in our Veterans Home.

Sincerely,



Robert Pence, Administrator