



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Spokane Veterans Home • 222 E 5th • Spokane WA 99202-0538

Dear Spokane Veterans Home Residents, Family, Representatives, and Staff:

It is with sadness that I share the passing of a Spokane Veterans Home Resident following their COVID-19 diagnosis, either due to COVID-19 or other underlying health conditions.

On behalf of the Spokane Veterans Home Team, we offer our sincere condolences to their family and loved ones during this very challenging time.

Additional updates for the Spokane Veterans Home:

Staffing Challenges:

Like many nursing homes in our region and even across the country, we are experiencing challenges with our staffing. Our priority remains the care of you or your loved one and we are working proactively to ensure adequate staffing now and in the coming months.

In order to mitigate some of these challenges we have taken a number of steps to ensure our veterans and their families are cared for with the dignity and respect they deserve. For our Home, this means that we have suspended new admissions and we are keeping our census at a lower level.

In order to fill our vacant positions, we are actively recruiting using careers.wa.gov, many social media sites, and virtual recruiting fairs. We are also using contracted agency staff and we have requested assistance with staffing through our state's Emergency Operations Center. Unfortunately, the EOC request did not lead to any staff members being able to assist, so we have asked that our assistance request be referred to FEMA.

In regard to the employee, contractor and volunteer vaccine requirements at both the state and national level, our HR professionals are in the process of verifying all employee vaccine status now. Volunteers and contractors have also received information on how to verify their vaccine status so they can continue serving our Veterans and Families.

The Veterans Homes are offering regular vaccination clinics and we are happy to report that we have seen an increase in the number of staff being vaccinated. If the clinic time or date doesn't work for a staff member, we will work with them to provide a vaccine on the spot, or at another time. As we're working to gather information on vaccination status, we are also sharing information on important deadlines to get vaccinated, and answering as many staff questions and concerns as possible.

Mask Requirements:

Employees in our Veterans Home continue to wear appropriate PPE at all times.

Changes to the DSHS Safe Start for Long Term Care now require all visitors to

wear face masks while in the Veterans Home at all times, regardless of vaccination status. Residents are also required to wear masks when outside of their rooms at all times, including during group activities, regardless of vaccination status. Residents are able to remove masks while eating in the dining rooms.

Visitation:

In addition to compassionate care visits, we will again be scheduling window visits with family and friends. 2 adults and 2 children may come at one time and must wear masks while on the Spokane Veterans Home grounds, regardless of vaccination status. All visits must be scheduled by calling 509-688-9209 or 509-993-4522.

Staffing Changes:

As many of you are aware, we are currently recruiting for a new DNS. I am serving as the Interim DNS and am honored to work alongside our excellent Spokane Veterans Home team, and with you and your loved ones each day. If you have questions, or need to reach me, please contact me at 509-344-5089.

Vaccine Information

As a part of our continued efforts to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, our home is holding vaccination clinics for all unvaccinated staff, residents, visitors, volunteers and family members who wish to receive the vaccine. We encourage all residents, staff, and community members who are able and eligible to be vaccinated to consider getting vaccinated for COVID-19. If you are interested in receiving a vaccine and would like more information about our upcoming Vaccine Clinics, please call 509-319-5083.

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>.

Thank you for your continued support of our staff members as they work hard to care for you or your loved one. We continue to chart new ground as the COVID-19 Pandemic continues and I am incredibly proud of how our Veterans Home Team, Residents and Families have worked together toward our common goals!

We will keep providing updates to you as things change but please know that our staff members continue to work diligently to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our building.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please let us know by calling 509-344-5770.

Sincerely

Kathi Clark, RN

Kathi Clark
Spokane Veterans Interim Director of Nursing Services