Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release

September 8, 2021

Statewide: In an effort to maintain transparency, WDVA continues to share information on COVID-19 and its impact on our State Veterans Homes.

Spokane Veterans Home: We are deeply saddened to share the loss of an Honored Spokane Veterans Home Resident following their COVID-19 diagnosis, either due to COVID-19 or other underlying medical conditions. Each of our Spokane Veterans Home Residents is part of our WDVA Family, and we extend our condolences to their family and friends during this very difficult time.

In addition, while conducting resident and staff testing over the past several days, six residents and ten staff have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Since July 21, 2021, twenty-seven residents and twenty staff have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Washington Solders Home, Orting: While conducting twice-weekly staff testing, one staff member was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Washington Veterans Home, Port Orchard: As a follow-up to our August 26 media release which indicated we were considering transferring residents on or around September 9, to other facilities as a result of staffing shortages, we are pleased to report that at this time, we will not need to transfer any residents to other facilities in our community.

We initially shared information on the moves because we wanted to ensure residents and families had advance information on what was happening in the Home and how we were addressing it, with our primary focus on maintaining resident health and safety.

While we do still have some staffing shortages, we have taken other measures that will allow us to continue caring for each of our residents at this time. Measures such as managing beds and moving residents internally have allowed us to hold units vacant and consolidate staff members. We are also continuing to hold on the admission of any new residents, using contracted agency staff members to fill in where we have vacancies, and actively recruiting to fill our vacant positions. It is possible that future transfers may be needed, but we will again provide residents and families with notice and explanation on what steps we're taking.

Previously Reported Information:
All staff are wearing appropriate PPE and we have adequate supplies of all PPE.

Resident testing will continue at least every 3-7 days until 14 days have passed without a positive result.

Staff continue to be tested according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirements.

Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place and we will conduct enhanced surveillance, including symptom and temperature checks, during every shift, for residents in affected areas for the next 14 days. Staff members continue to closely monitor all residents.

We are in close contact with the Department of Health Infection Preventionist as well as the Local Health Departments to determine whether there are additional steps that can be taken.

Staff at all State Veterans Homes will continue to monitor 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. Staff are asked to report any symptoms that occur after coming to work.

As a part of our continued effort to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the State Veterans Homes are now vaccine administrators and are holding scheduled vaccination clinics for unvaccinated residents and staff on-site. We encourage all residents, staff, and community members who are able and eligible to be vaccinated to consider getting vaccinated for 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.

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