



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Walla Walla Veterans Home**

92 Wainwright Drive | Walla Walla, Washington 99362 | 509-394-6800 | 509-527-4199 (fax)

January 19, 2022

Dear WWVH Residents, Families, Representatives, and Staff:

Our Washington State Veterans Homes continue to face staffing challenges which unfortunately are worsening due to the Omicron variant and how fast it's spreading. At the Walla Walla Veterans Home, we have reached the Contingency Staffing Level based on CDC and DOH guidance. Steps we have taken to increase our staffing levels include changing some employee shifts, changing staffing patterns, temporarily closing Houses, and increasing our use of agency staff and overtime. However, none of these steps have brought us back up to conventional staffing levels.

To continue providing good care for residents while reducing the burden on available staff, we will be changing the way that some people can report to work after testing positive for COVID-19. These changes follow the most current CDC, DOH, and local health jurisdiction guidance and are based on the increased number of Covid-19 cases (and resulting staff absences) that we are experiencing and that we see occurring throughout the Walla Walla Valley. I want to emphasize that we are not bringing people back if they are exhibiting symptoms such as fever or cough, and we are not asking people who don't feel well to come to work. The specific changes we are making are strictly in accordance with guidance that the CDC has put out for health care workers.

Under current CDC guidelines for contingency staffing, if an employee tests positive, and they are asymptomatic or have mild and resolving symptoms resembling a cold, they can return to work 5 days after symptoms first appeared or their positive test was collected. They must also be fever-free for at least 24 hours, without fever reducing medication. (Under conventional staffing guidelines, we had been waiting 10 days from the date of the test.)

Attached below are documents from the CDC and DOH that go into more detail about the various phases of staffing during critical conditions such as the pandemic. We want to ensure that both staff and residents are safe while welcoming our staff back as soon as practicable within CDC guidelines. Although our staff is at max capacity, we continue to tirelessly go above and beyond to ensure that proper, high-quality care is being given to all residents.

Serving Those Who Served

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we move through the ever-changing pandemic regulations and requirements as gracefully as we can. It is our goal and intention to continue updating you with frequent communication. I know you've been receiving a lot of letters from me recently. I'm hopeful that the tone of these letters will someday soon become more and more positive as we make it through to the other side of these hard years and begin to enjoy life more openly and freely again – together!

With hope,

Lonna Leno, Administrator
Walla Walla Veterans Home



Jan 2022 DOH
820-217-InterimHCSt:



Dec 23, 2021 CDC -
guidance staffing LTC