

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



December 14, 2020

Walla Walla: Over the weekend, the Walla Walla Veterans Home received a positive COVID-19 lab result for one of our Veterans Home residents. The resident is asymptomatic and is being monitored closely. The Walla Walla Veterans Home team has placed the resident on isolation and they are wearing appropriate PPE and using all appropriate precautions.

Because the resident was asymptomatic, staff immediately re-tested the resident using the point of care rapid test and this test result was negative. The point of care rapid tests are 98 – 100% accurate in providing negative results. Staff also collected a second PCR lab test today and will work with the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health to determine what additional steps should be taken.

“Our Veterans Home Team is working hard to ensure this resident, and all Veterans and Spouses in our Home, receive the best possible care,” said Interim Walla Walla Veterans Home Administrator Victor Odiakosa. “We know that receiving a positive COVID-19 result is incredibly concerning for everyone involved which is why we’re working to confirm the result, while we follow all possible precautions.”

Two staff members have also been diagnosed with COVID-19 through PCR lab tests. One additional staff member today tested positive using the point of care rapid test, so we have performed a PCR lab test and to confirm this rapid test.

All residents at WWVH will be tested and then retested every 5-7 days until 14 days have passed without a new positive resident. Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place and the Walla Walla Veterans Home will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for residents in the affected areas for the next 14 days.

We are working with Walla Walla County Department of Community Health to determine next steps with regard to additional measures. We also are following guidance from CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are safeguarding our residents and staff.

We are asking our staff to pay close attention to 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. In addition, staff are asked to report any symptoms that occur after coming to work.

The Walla Walla Veterans 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 Walla Walla County requires staff to be tested twice each week. This may result in the identification of asymptomatic carriers, but is an important tool in defending against COVID-19.

We are notifying residents, staff and family representatives via email or letter and a post to the website. We have informed employees of their possible exposure in the workplace but we will maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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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Media Contact

Heidi Audette

Communications and Legislative Director

(360) 791-8966 – cell

heidia@dva.wa.gov