

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



December 24, 2020

Orting: The Washington Soldiers Home has received additional COVID-19 test results for both residents and staff members. Eight additional residents have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and one additional staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Testing continues for both residents and staff members and will continue until fourteen days have passed without a new positive. In addition, we are in close contact with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department and following guidance from the CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are taking every possible precaution. Residents are also being monitored for symptoms every four hours for at least the next fourteen days.

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 Homes, are 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 Pierce and Kitsap County requires staff to be tested once 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.

With news of the COVID-19 vaccine being shipped and administered to health care providers and long-term care facility residents, we also want to provide an update on how the Washington State Veterans Homes are participating in the vaccine process.

The WDVA Veterans Homes Program has registered for the Operation Warp Speed Pharmacy Partnership Program. Through this program, residents and staff will receive one of the vaccine series authorized for administration through Walgreens. Our partners at Walgreens will set up a vaccine clinic in our Homes where both residents and staff, who have signed consents, will be vaccinated.

At this time, we do not have details regarding the dates of immunization at the Soldiers Home, or the specific product that will be administered; however, as soon as we have details from our Walgreens representatives, we will share this information.

More information on Operation Warp Speed is available at:

<https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html>

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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