

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



December 31, 2020

Orting: As the Washington Soldiers Home continues weekly COVID-19 testing, we have identified eleven additional residents diagnosed with COVID-19. Our thoughts are with each of these residents and their families as they battle this new enemy.

Weekly testing 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.

At all State Veterans Homes, 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 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.

The WDVA Veterans Homes Program has registered for the Operation Warp Speed Pharmacy Partnership Program. Through this program, the residents and staff will receive one of the vaccine series authorized for administration.

The vaccine clinic date at the Washington Soldiers Home is January 7, 2021.

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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