



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Walla Walla Veterans Home
92 Wainwright Drive • Walla Walla, Washington 99362 • 509-394-6800

February 5, 2021

Dear Veterans Home Residents, Families, and Resident Representatives:

We are reaching out again to keep you updated on the COVID-19 status here at the Walla Walla Veterans Home. I am happy to report that we have not had any new COVID-19 cases in staff with facility exposure since January 15th. In addition, all Walla Walla Veterans Home residents have remained COVID-19 free throughout the course of the pandemic. You can find agency-wide cumulative information on the number of residents and staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic at www.dva.wa.gov/covid.

As mentioned in previous letters, we have completed our first two COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Residents and staff who received their first shot at the most recent clinic will receive the second shot during our final clinic on February 11th.

Are you interested in knowing when **you** can get vaccinated? We suggest using the [Phase Finder Tool](#) to see locations and learn when you will be eligible to receive the vaccine. The Walla Walla County Department of Health Website <https://www.covidwwc.com/> is another helpful resource. At this site, you may check eligibility and availability of COVID-19 vaccine clinics that are being held at the Walla Walla Fairgrounds.

In light of the new “Healthy Washington - Roadmap to Recovery” plan that is currently in effect, you may be curious about how this impacts Veterans Homes in Washington State. **As of today, Puget Sound (King, Pierce, Snohomish) and West (Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Thurston) are the only regions in Phase 2.** Regional phases are updated every other Friday. February 14 will be the next date for **regions** to move forward or backward in phases.

While awareness of regional phases is helpful for the community at large, **long-term care facilities in Washington State are required to follow the [Safe Start For Long Term Care Recommendations and Requirements](#).** So, although a **region** may be in a particular phase, **long-term care facilities** in that area may be in a different “Safe Start” phase, based on community and facility positivity and transmission rates, and other factors.

All WDVA Veterans Homes are still in **Phase 1 of Safe Start for Long-Term Care:**

- **Visitor Policies in Phase 1 & 2:** We are receiving questions about how COVID-19 vaccines will impact family and visitor policies in our Homes. At this time, the CDC has not changed their recommendations for allowing visitors in long-term care facilities. Even if both the resident and family member/visitor have been vaccinated, they are still not permitted to enter the Home until Phase 3.
- **Compassionate Care, End of Life, Outdoor, and Essential Support Person Visits in Phase 1 & 2:** These scheduled and monitored visits are allowed strict with adherence to guidance in Section II of the Safe Start for LTC document. Outbreaks and staffing levels may impact these visits.
- **Window Visits:** Allowed, unmonitored, no appointment necessary
- **Communal Dining:** Communal dining is allowed for Residents who are not COVID-19 positive following [QSO-20-39-NH](#) guidance, while maintaining social distancing and sanitizing before and after meals.
- **Activities:** Group activities may occur for Residents who are not COVID-19 positive following the guidance in [QSO-20-39-NH](#). Virtual activities are also still encouraged.
- Other measures such as universal use of PPE, employee screening, frequent cleaning, handwashing and social distancing requirements all remain in effect.

We know the past year has been incredibly challenging for you and your loved ones. While it's encouraging to be moving in a direction closer to "normal", we must remain steadfast in following CDC and CMS guidelines for the continued health and safety of our residents, loved ones and staff. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Lonna Leno
Walla Walla Veterans Home