

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



January 6, 2021

ORTING and PORT ORCHARD: Today, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs mourns the loss of two of our Veterans Homes Program family members. A Veteran from the Soldiers Home in Orting and a Veteran from the Veterans Home in Port Orchard has passed away. The Veterans were diagnosed with COVID-19 and sadly passed, either from the effects of COVID-19 or due to other medical conditions that were present prior to the COVID-19 diagnosis. We offer our condolences to their family and we share their sense of loss of these brave heroes.

Facility-wide testing continues at the both Homes. At the Veterans Home in Port Orchard, one additional resident and two additional staff members have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Staff members continue to closely monitor all residents and to isolate COVID-19 positive residents. Staff who are diagnosed with COVID-19 are self-isolating at home. In addition, we are in close contact with the Department of Health Infection Preventionist as well as the Local Health Departments to determine whether there are additional steps that can be taken to prevent further spread of the virus.

Staff at all State Veterans Homes will continue to monitor 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 State Veterans 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 Kitsap and 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.

VACCINE INFORMATION:

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 Soldiers Home vaccine clinic will take place on January 7 and the second clinic for the Veterans Home will take place on January 20. Residents and staff at the Veterans Home in Port Orchard who received a first vaccine shot on December 30 will receive their second shot on this day. Veterans Home residents and staff who would like to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine may also get their first shot on January 20.

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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