



STATE OF WASHINGTON

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Walla Walla Veterans Home**

**92 Wainwright Drive • Walla Walla, Washington 99362 • 509-394-6800**

Dear Resident Family or Representative:

We are writing today to keep you up to date on how we are responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic at the Walla Walla Veterans Home.

First, I need to say thank you again for your patience and understanding as we take this COVID-19 journey together. None of us could have predicted the situation we are in now, but we continue to do the best we can in light of the situation and the regulations we are working under.

Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services created a rule for all nursing facilities to routinely test all staff. This testing must take place on either a weekly or monthly basis, depending on the positivity rate in the facility's community.

We believe that routine testing of staff is a vital tool that is necessary protect your loved one. Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have witnessed the importance of implementing preventive measures to keep COVID-19 from entering or spreading in long-term care facilities. Along with daily screening of staff, cleaning frequently touched surfaces, wearing procedure masks, and frequent handwashing, testing is our next line of defense. Each of our Veterans Homes will receive rapid point-of-care (POC) diagnostic testing devices, which allow licensed staff to test and receive results in 15 minutes. This is wonderful news as we work to prevent asymptomatic carriers from inadvertently spreading COVID-19. If a Home does not have a rapid point-of-care diagnostic testing device, or if they are waiting for additional testing supplies to be delivered, we will conduct this mandatory testing either with our partners at the VA Medical Center, or through a local lab.

With increased staff testing, it is possible that additional asymptomatic carriers will be identified. If this occurs, we will notify you, as we have in the past, and follow all of our regular procedures including contact tracing (which may result in pro-active testing of residents), deep cleaning and sanitizing. Depending on our staffing levels, we may need to temporarily suspend our outdoor visits. We know this may be distressing to your resident and to you, especially since we were just able to get the visiting stations up and running, but as with our other proactive measures, this is meant to keep both your resident and you safe and healthy.

Please let me know if you have questions about any of the information in this letter, or about anything else happening in our Home. We remain committed to serving your resident and you as best as we can.

Daniel Knapp  
Administrator