

# Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



**December 16, 2020**

**Orting:** The Washington Soldiers Home received a positive COVID-19 lab result for one of our Veterans Home residents. The resident is being monitored closely. The Soldiers Home team has placed the resident on isolation and they are wearing appropriate PPE and using all appropriate precautions.

“Our Soldiers Home Team is focused on the safety and well-being of every Veteran and Spouse in our care,” said Soldiers Home Administrator Robert Pence. “The challenges our team faces are unlike any we have seen before, but they are up to the task and working around the clock on behalf of these heroes.”

One staff member has also been diagnosed with COVID-19 through a PCR lab test.

All residents at the Soldiers Home will be tested and then each week for 14 days. Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place and the Soldiers Home will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for residents for the next 14 days.

We are working with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department to determine next steps with regard to additional measures. We also are following guidance from CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are safeguarding our residents and staff.

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 Soldiers Home, is 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.

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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