

# Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



**December 28, 2020**

**Walla Walla and Port Orchard:** Over the weekend, additional COVID-19 test results were received at both the Walla Walla Veterans Home and Washington Veterans Home.

At the Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard, one resident was diagnosed with COVID-19. The resident was moved to a local COVID-19 care facility.

At the Walla Walla Veterans Home, one staff member was diagnosed with COVID-19 and is self-isolating at home.

Additional testing will take place this week for residents in affected areas and staff members and we will continue consulting with Local Health Departments while also following guidance from the CDC, CMS and our State Department of Health to ensure we are taking every possible precaution. Residents will also be monitored for symptoms every four hours for at least the next fourteen days.

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 Walla Walla County requires staff testing twice each week, and in Kitsap 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.

Tentative vaccine clinic dates at the Veterans Homes are: December 30 at the Washington Veterans Home, December 31 at the Walla Walla Veterans Home, January 4 at the Spokane Veterans Home and January 7 at the Washington Soldiers Home.

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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Media Contact

Heidi Audette  
Communications and Legislative Director  
(360) 791-8966 – cell  
[heidia@dva.wa.gov](mailto:heidia@dva.wa.gov)