

# Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



**June 29, 2021**

**Walla Walla:** In an effort to maintain transparency, WDVA continues to share information on COVID-19 and its impact on our State Veterans Homes.

Residents at the Walla Walla Veterans Home, who live in Houses where a staff member had recently been diagnosed with COVID-19, ([Family Letter, June 21](#)) were tested yesterday using rapid COVID-19 tests. The rapid COVID-19 tests for two residents returned with positive results. In order to confirm the COVID-19 diagnosis, PCR tests have been performed and sent to a local laboratory, those results are pending.

Affected Houses are currently quarantined and any COVID-19 positive residents are isolated in their rooms. Staff are wearing appropriate PPE while working in affected Houses and we have adequate supplies of all PPE. Resident testing will continue each week in the affected Houses until 14 days have passed without a positive result.

Staff continue to be tested once a week according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirements. A second staff member, who worked in a different location, has also been diagnosed with COVID-19. Houses where this staff member worked are also under quarantine at this time.

Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place and we will conduct enhanced surveillance, including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks, for residents for the next 14 days. Staff members continue to closely monitor all residents and to isolate COVID-19 positive residents.

We are in close contact with the Department of Health Infection Preventionist as well as the Local Health Department to determine whether there are additional steps that can be taken.

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. 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 Walla Walla County requires staff to be tested once each week.

As a part of our continued efforts to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the State Veterans Homes are now vaccine administrators and will hold scheduled vaccination clinics for unvaccinated residents and staff on-site. We encourage all residents, staff, and community members who are able and eligible to be vaccinated to consider getting vaccinated for COVID-19.

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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