



Department of Health

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

April 3, 2020

COVID-19 Update

Dear Resident/Representative,

We continue to take active steps to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Unfortunately, we have had our first resident to test positive, so we are now using the experiences of other Veterans' Homes, who are already dealing with this virus, to respond to this and implement more preventive measures.

Current government guidance directs us to assume that every resident with identified symptoms is infected, so we have a plan for how we will manage this. We are one of the few facilities in the area with a negative pressure room to help prevent airborne transmission of the virus. If necessary, a resident may be moved to our negative pressure room. If that is not available or appropriate, we will isolate a resident in their room for a 14-day period. If a resident also goes to the hospital, we are assuming they have been exposed and will also require isolation in their room for a 14-day period. Whenever a resident is isolated, we will make sure they are being checked on regularly throughout each shift and provided with socialization by staff whenever possible.

Please continue to use the Home's iPads for video chatting. We recommend that families also send short videos providing reassurance to our residents. A simulated presence is a valuable gift. This involves playing an individualized video or audio recording of family members and friends. This is especially comforting for residents who have been used to a lot of visitors prior to this outbreak, and it is also beneficial to residents with dementia. We would be happy to help get these messages to your loved ones using our iPads.

We are evaluating if mail or package delivery may also be a source of transmission. The best guidance indicates that the virus does die after a day or so, so we are going to let mail and packages sit for the period of time necessary to reduce exposure. We are also eliminating outside meal service deliveries until further notice because of the concerns about virus transmission on food and packaging. We have no control over how things are handled by outside vendors, as opposed to our rigorous monitoring of our own staff. If you have any concerns with mail, package and outside food deliveries, please speak with a Social Worker.

We have received several face mask donations. Thank you! Information about these masks is located on our Facebook page: New York State Veterans' Home, Oxford.

Our Volunteer Guild was gracious enough to let us open the Gift Shop and provide free snacks to residents and our hard-working staff. We are so fortunate to have a supportive Guild and Volunteer group! Even though we are not allowed to have them visit and help us at this time, they are here in spirit and through the goodwill they are spreading by this kind act.

If you have any questions, please let us know. We are grateful to be of service to our residents.

Sincerely,

Kurt D. Apthorpe, MBA, CNHA, LNHA
Administrator