



Department of Health

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Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

April 21, 2020

Dear Residents, Families and Friends:

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to rage throughout the country in an unending and unprecedented manner, the Veterans Home is being challenged in ways it has never seen in its history.

The staff continues to care for our residents as if they were members of their own families. As has been communicated to you, all units are under containment and all residents are being treated as if they were coronavirus positive. We recently received the ability to test for and will test for the virus as necessary, although as stated, every resident is being treated as if they have the virus. Further, as results become available, we shall share them with appropriate family members. At the current time, we have two COVID-19 positive residents in house, and one in the hospital.

The literature and regular federal and state updates have indicated that the coronavirus takes a toll on the elderly, persons with weakened immune systems and those with pre-existing health conditions in spite of all that is being done to treat the virus. As all nursing home residents including those at the Veterans Home fall into these categories, we have had deaths, some related to, and others unrelated to the virus. We have communicated to individual families on the health status of their loved ones as specific clinical information has become available.

We have also encouraged end of life visits as necessary. We shall continue to inform next of kin of their loved one's status and encourage visits as we become aware of their evolving status. Please note, however, that due to HIPAA Privacy Rules, we cannot reveal the medical status of your loved one if you are not the next of kin, nor disclose information on other residents to you. We appreciate your support in helping us comply with these directives.

On the staffing front, we continue to screen staff including taking temperature checks upon entry into the facility. We have seen an increase in the number of staff who are out sick, and we are working to ensure appropriate staffing levels are maintained to care for our residents. We are also looking at ways in which we can consolidate units to

economize our use of clinical staff and other resources. We understand that any resident room change may be difficult, and we ask for your understanding.

The Department of Health continues to provide us with enough Personal Protective Equipment to care for our residents, and we do not anticipate any shortages. The Housekeeping Department continues to provide a clean environment for the residents and staff.

The No-Visitor policy continues to be in effect, and we continue to be grateful to you for your full cooperation as we continue to follow the guidelines established by Governor Cuomo, the DOH and CDC.

Please continue to reach out to our Social Work and Therapeutic Recreation Departments to connect with your loved ones through Face Time, Skype, video chatting or phone conversation. We thank you for your resourcefulness and patience during these very trying times. For those who have not reached out, you may contact our Therapeutic Recreation Department at 914-788-6175 to arrange a video visit.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Best Regards,

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