



Department of Health

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September 17, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Dear Resident / Representative:

This letter is to provide you with an update on what is happening at the Veterans Home with respect to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

We currently do not have any COVID-19 positive residents at the facility. New federal rules issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) require that the facility test every resident every three to seven days anytime a resident or staff member tests positive for COVID-19. The Home will conduct the testing until no new cases of COVID-19 infection among residents or staff are identified for a period of at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.

On the staff front, we have had a total of 120 staff test positive or presumptive positive for the novel Coronavirus. Almost all of the staff who tested positive at the end of August are back to work having new negative test results, and not exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. We continue to test staff every week. Further, we continue to have adequate personal protective equipment supplies to meet our operational needs, as well as the required 60-day supply to meet future needs.

As you are all aware, there have been recent changes to visiting your loved one in a nursing home. The Home is ready to meet this requirement with outside and inside visits starting on September 24th barring any new positive test results. Window visits will also continue for those family members who choose this method of visiting. Please give advance notice to the Pastoral Care Department at (914) 788-6180 so we can schedule the appropriate visit with your loved one.

For those families who are not able to visit, you may contact the Therapeutic Recreation Department at 914-788-6175 / 6178 to facilitate a virtual / video visit.

Visitors from states on the NYS COVID-19 Travel Advisory list may visit for end-of-life and compassionate care reasons only. Please call Elder Jesse Martin at (914) 788-6180 to facilitate a waiver request for approval for you to visit.

After the Zoom meeting of September 15th several questions came up, and I would like to use this opportunity to answer some of those. Please note that the requirement for COVID-19 testing prior to a face-to-face visit is a Health Advisory issued by the New York State Department of Health. The September 17, 2020 revised Health Advisory can be found online at https://health.ny.gov/facilities/nursing/docs/2020-09-17_revised_visitation_advisory.pdf.

The facility's face-to-face visitation plan and factsheet will be posted early next week on the facility's webpage at NYSVets.org. Additional information is as follows:

- Visitors to nursing homes, meeting the criteria for face-to-face visitation, are required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within the past 7 days.
- The 7-day requirement starts from the date of the specimen collection for a COVID-19 test, not the date of the test results.
- Visitors for residents at end-of-life are exempt from the required proof of having a negative COVID-19 test within the past 7 days.
- Nursing Home staff is required to obtain specific information on visitors to assist the State and County with contact tracing. In addition to visitor identification, the Home is to document the visitor's first and last name, physical (street) address, daytime and evening telephone numbers, email address (if available), and date and time of visit.
- Children under age 18 who can wear and tolerate a mask all times while at the Home including during the length of the visit, are welcome if accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older and comply with all other requirements.

We have received delivery of the influenza vaccine and have sent out consents to responsible parties regarding providing the vaccine to your loved one. Please complete the form and return to the Home as soon as possible. Protecting our residents, your loved one, is a high priority for us, and we thank you for working with us to keep them safe.

Finally, the Nursing Supervisors are available to provide information about your loved one in the event you cannot reach unit staff. The Nursing Supervisors can be reached at (914) 987-9056 or (914) 987-9057.

Thank you for working with us and advocating on behalf of your loved ones.

Sincerely,

Nancy Baa-Danso

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