



Department of Health

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 9, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Dear Resident / Representative:

This letter is to provide an update on the status of the Veterans Home's efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The safety and wellbeing of all residents is our top priority. The Infection Prevention and Control Committee continues to meet as necessary to review and act on guidance from the federal and state governments, and works closely with health department contacts.

There has been one new positive resident case this week. A total of three (3) residents have tested positive since testing started. We are conducting another round of facility-wide resident tests in accordance with current guidance.

Twenty-three employees have tested positive or presumptive positive since testing became readily available. Staff are being tested at least every 7 days, similar to residents.

The residential units are on quarantine with a higher level of precautions due to the potential contact with an employee who tested positive. These precautionary measures include requiring residents to remain in their rooms with their door closed whenever possible.

The Veterans Home is making progress in meeting the state and federal criteria for opening up for face-to-face visits which will require social distancing, a face covering and hand sanitizing. Based on the current positive test, the next possible start date for outside visitation will be October 23rd barring any new positive cases. Families will be notified in advance.

The facility's outside and face-to-face visitation plan and factsheet will be posted prior to opening for visitation 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.
- 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.

In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to continue to communicate via virtual methods such as FaceTime with your loved one. Please call ahead and speak with Social Work staff if assistance is needed with video chatting. The smiles we see after each virtual visit is uplifting.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Nicole M. Gallagher

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