



## Department of Health

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Commissioner

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 16, 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 (IPC) Committee continues to meet as necessary to review and act on guidance from the federal and state government, and work closely with health department contacts.

There have been no new positive or presumed positive cases. A total of twenty-one residents have tested positive since testing started along with one resident who was presumed to be positive. All tests from the facility-wide resident tests have come back negative.

Twenty-six employees have tested positive or presumptive positive since testing became readily available.

Residents are now longer quarantined to their rooms, however they are restricted to their neighborhood, unless under an individual isolation order. Outside visits are allowed. Please call at least 24 hours in advance and arrange an outside visit with Social Work. The Visitation Plan is posted on the Home's website.

Residents going to overnight hospital stays, emergency room visits, offsite medical procedures where a resident's face mask is off for an extended period or an offsite medical visit involving a high risk procedure (such as an upper endoscopy, bronchoscopy, etc.), will continue to be quarantined to their room for 14 days upon return to the Home.

There are two important updates this week involving routine office visits where there is no significant risk of COVID-19 exposure and furloughs. Due to the extended period of this pandemic and the stress it is placing on our residents, the IPC Committee received assurances that the need for quarantine following an outside doctor's office visit can and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The staff accompanying the resident will monitor that a mask is worn, proper physical distancing and hand hygiene are performed, and no potential risk exposure occurred during the visit. If these conditions are met and the resident is asymptomatic, the resident will not be quarantined. Daily vital signs and checks for respiratory illness symptoms will continue to be done for 14 days.

If a resident attends an outside appointment in a high-risk area, the medical provider may determine if a quarantine is still necessary. We will also monitor community spread / positivity rates and may require quarantine based on these rates. More frequent virus testing may also be done based on the medical provider's recommendations.

The other important update is that furloughs will be permitted and determined on a case-by-case basis. A furlough may be requested for part of a day or overnight stays away from the Home. The resident and/or the responsible party will be expected to sign and adhere to the attached Furlough Instructions Acknowledgment form prior to leaving the Home. We will also monitor community spread / positivity rates and may stop furloughs based on these rates or the positivity rates within the Home. Notice will be sent out to everyone if there is a change. More frequent virus testing will also be done upon return from furlough. Residents returning from furlough will be expected to quarantine and be monitored for 14 days upon return.

Window visits and video chatting continue to be available. Please speak with Recreation Therapy (RT) staff about setting this up for you. Please provide at least 24-hour notice in advance of the visit.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Be well,

*Kurt D. Apthorpe*

Kurt D. Apthorpe, MBA, CNHA, LNHA  
Administrator

NYS Veterans' Home

4207 State Highway 220 | Oxford, NY 13830



## Furlough Instructions Acknowledgment

Please adhere to the following guidelines to keep your loved one (our resident) safe from COVID-19 and to reduce the spread of the virus to other compromised residents at the New York State Veterans' Home at Oxford upon their return.

- 1) You and your loved one, our resident, are to wear face masks covering both the nose and mouth at all times when within six feet of each other. Place a face mask on your loved one when near others, including infants and children.
- 2) Wash hands frequently (both yours and your loved one).
- 3) Check the NYS travel advisory to be sure that there are no guests from a state on the advisory list who will be near your loved one, our resident.  
(<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>)
- 4) If your loved one, our resident, develops a fever or respiratory symptoms during their visit, please contact your local health care provider for guidance and notify the facility of the symptoms. Contact the facility at 607-843-3101 and request to speak with the clinic to report any fever or respiratory symptoms. **\*Do not return your loved one (our resident) to the Veterans Home until you have notified the resident's medical provider of your loved one's symptoms!**
- 5) Upon return to the facility, your loved one, our resident, will be placed on a 14-day quarantine for observation and monitoring. No on-site visitations can occur during this time.
- 6) Additional COVID-19 testing upon return to the Veterans Home is expected. The testing schedule is to be determined.
- 7) Failure to comply with these furlough instructions may prohibit future furloughs.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the risks associated with COVID-19 and agree to adhere to the guidelines detailed above.

X \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Resident

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone / Cellular Phone Number

Enjoy your visit!