



Department of Health

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 29, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Dear Resident / Representative:

This letter is to provide you with an update on the status of the Veterans Home's efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The safety and wellbeing of all residents is our top priority. We continue to receive guidance from federal and state government agencies and the departments that oversee nursing homes. The Infection Prevention and Control Committee continues to meet as necessary to review new guidance and working closely with the county, regional, and state health department contacts.

There have been no new resident positive cases in October. A total of twenty-one residents have tested positive since testing started along with one resident who was presumed to be positive. We are currently conducting facility-wide resident tests every 3-7 days until there are 14 consecutive days of no positive employee or resident tests. We will also continue to test all residents with symptoms or if a resident must test prior to a hospital appointment/procedure.

Twenty-eight employees have tested positive or presumptive positive since testing became readily available. Staff are also being tested every 3-7 days until there are 14 consecutive days of no positive employee or resident test results.

Pine, Apple and Hawthorn Neighborhoods are on 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. Pine's quarantine is scheduled to end on November 3rd. Apple's is scheduled to end on November 11th, and Hawthorn's should end on November 13th.

Any positive case of a resident or staff requires the immediate halt of all outside visits for anyone in the Home. We apologize for the confusion that resulted from this past weekend and to those who had visits planned or were on your way to the Home for a visit when the notice came out that visits had to be cancelled immediately. As soon as test results are received, we are required to immediately cancel any outside visits.

Since we have now transitioned outside visits into visits in the Auditorium, we will be referring to those types of visits as "Auditorium visits" to try and reduce future confusion. Based on the recent positive test and exposure, the next possible start date for "Auditorium visits" for everyone will be November 14th.

When there is a positive case, we are following Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.18 issued on April 19, 2020, and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Guidance Q80-20-29-NH issued on May 8, 2020. We will notify all residents and family members and/or representatives of all residents if any resident tests positive for COVID-19 or if any resident suffers a COVID-19 related death within 24 hours of such positive test result or death. In addition, notification will be made when a staff person tests positive or if there is a cluster of three or more residents and/or staff with new onset respiratory symptoms. That notice will be sent by letter and/or email Listserv based on your preference. Please let us know if you would like to change your preferred method of communication.

Window visits are currently not specifically regulated, so the Infection Prevention and Control Committee has agreed to continue to allow this as long as everyone wears a face mask while on the property, keeps windows closed, and follows all other public health guidelines. Please speak with Recreation Therapy (RT) staff about setting up a window visit. Please provide at least 24-hour notice in advance of the visit.

Finally, when having food delivered, bringing in food items, or dropping off food for residents, please alert Security so that we can make sure it is being refrigerated or handled correctly.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Stay well,

Kurt D. Apthorpe

Kurt D. Apthorpe, MBA, CNHA, LNHA
Administrator

NYS Veterans' Home

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