



## Department of Health

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

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

**LISA J. PINO, M.A., J.D.**  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 30, 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 have been no new positive or presumed positive resident COVID-19 cases. A total of three residents have tested positive since testing started. 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. Residents are also tested if symptomatic and when required prior to a hospital/medical appointment or procedure.

Today we have reported one new employee positive test result. A total of twenty-five 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 now on quarantine level precautions due to the potential contact with the employee who tested positive. These measures include requiring residents to remain in their room with their door closed whenever possible. These quarantine precautions will continue until November 14<sup>th</sup>, pending any new exposure or new guidance.

Further, the New York State Department of Health (Department) was on-site for a Focused Infection Control Survey on September 25<sup>th</sup>. During the survey, the Department, although we disagreed, determined that residents were not socially distanced by more than 6' in the dining rooms. We have evaluated this deficient practice and are in the process of revamping meal service for residents and educating all staff on these updated practices. In accordance with the Department's Health Advisory of September 17, 2020 and until such time that the Department determines that we are compliant with all regulations and guidance, we are not permitted to have face-to-face visits. Barring any further compliance concerns or positive COVID-19 test results, we anticipate a reboot of face-to-face visits on November 17, 2020. We will continue to conduct virtual and window visits which may be scheduled with the Social Work staff by calling (585) 345-2051. Families will be notified in advance of the resumption of face-to-face visits, and we sincerely apologize for the delay and inconvenience.

The Home's visitation plan and factsheet will be posted prior to opening for visitation on the facility's webpage at [NYSVets.org](http://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.

Again, we strongly encourage you to continue to communicate via virtual methods such as FaceTime with your loved one or schedule a window visit. Please call ahead and speak with the Social Work staff at (585) 345-2051.

Thank you for entrusting your loved ones to our care, and your unwavering support of the facility and its staff. As always, we are a phone call away.

Sincerely,

*Nicole M. Gallagher*

Nicole M. Gallagher, LNHA

Administrator

Western New York State Veterans Home

220 Richmond Avenue

Batavia, NY 14020