



## Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

### Updates 1.13.2021 for Family & Friends

Dear Family and Friends,

We want to thank you for your encouragement and support throughout this pandemic. Please know that we continue doing everything we can to ensure the safety and well-being of our members.

#### **COVID-19 Updates:**

We're heartbroken that despite the efforts of our team, one of our members who tested positive for COVID-19 has passed away since our last update. Please join me in extending our deepest sympathies to the loved ones of this special member.

Despite this news, we are thankful that we have had no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our veteran care community since our last update. In addition, we are pleased that two employees and three members at the Veterans Home are no longer COVID-positive.

Here is our current and cumulative information:

Current Active COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	<b>2 (one member, one employee)</b>
Current Active COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	<b>0</b>
Cumulative COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	49 (sixteen members, three contracted individuals, thirty employees)
Cumulative COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	2 (one member, one employee)
Total Recovered:	46 (thirteen members, thirty employees, three contracted individuals)
Cumulative COVID-19 Related Deaths:	3 (three members)

We're doing everything possible to protect those who live and work in the Veterans Home with our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan, which follows all guidance from local, state, and federal health officials. It includes:

- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment;
- Screening and monitoring of members, staff, and visitors for symptoms;
- Testing members and staff based on federal and state guidance;
- Quarantining COVID-19 positive members with dedicated staff to provide care;
- Taking environmental safety precautions, such as disinfecting high-touch surfaces;
- Adhering to safe visitation procedures; and
- Assuring safe activities and dining experiences.

See below for the full plan.

As a reminder, COVID-19 testing (nasal swabs) for all members and staff continues twice per week. We continue to conduct additional testing to quickly be able to isolate any positive cases to ensure safety for all. In addition, staff working in affected areas will wear N95 masks for additional protection.

### **COVID-19 Vaccinations:**

As you know, our first round of COVID vaccines are scheduled for this Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. This is an important day for our members, you, and for our employees as we start our journey to a healthier year!

### **Questions:**

If you have any questions, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or [Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov](mailto:Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov). As this pandemic continues, please be assured our commitment to the well-being of our members' and staff remains our top priority.

Sincerely,  
Megan Corcoran

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### **Veterans Home COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan**

First and foremost, our priority is to keep everyone safe and healthy. We are in close contact with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials to ensure we are taking all appropriate steps at this time. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and state and local health officials to protect our members and staff from this virus, and are taking every action possible to prevent it from spreading in our care community.

The following is a summary of our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan.

- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as directed by CMS guidelines. Staff continues to wear PPE, including KN95 masks, eye protection, gloves, and gowns depending on the community's COVID-19 status. Members are asked to wear a face covering when interfacing with others or when out of their rooms.
- Screening and monitoring members and staff for symptoms. We have increased our screening and monitoring of members and staff for COVID-19 symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

We all play a part in keeping ourselves and others healthy. Please wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, wear a mask or face covering, and practice social distancing.

We continue to educate members and staff on COVID-19. For additional information, please visit the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) or the Wisconsin Department of Health's website at [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov).

- Tracing individuals who come in contact with anyone affected. The community will work with the tracing staff from state and local health departments to assess all who may have come in close contact with an affected individual. We will continue to follow all requirements in implementing the next steps which may include self-monitoring as determined by health officials.

- Testing members and staff for COVID-19. We are following all guidance from federal, state and local health officials on testing required for members and staff. The frequency of routine testing is determined based on the number of COVID-19 cases in the local county. Additionally, those who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms are tested to quickly identify and isolate members and staff who may be positive for COVID-19. Once there is a confirmed COVID-19 case, testing is increased to every three to seven days until testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 infection among staff or members for a period of at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.
- Quarantining COVID-19 positive members and implementing enhanced infection control measures. We have established a designated area in the building for any COVID-19 positive members, and they are cared for and supported by designated staff. We continue to follow all infection control protocols as outlined by the CDC, CMS, and state and local health officials. COVID-19 positive members remain in quarantine until well and cleared by medical professionals, as well as meet the CDC symptom-based criteria for return to normal activity.
- Advising COVID-19 positive staff to take all appropriate measures. For the health and well-being of our care community, any staff member with a COVID-19 diagnosis must quarantine at home, contact a medical provider for care, and notify their supervisor. We are following CDC guidance on the return-to-work criteria for health care professionals with confirmed COVID-19.
- Taking environmental safety precautions. Housekeeping staff continues to take extra measures to clean and disinfect all high-touch areas throughout the building. This includes countertops and tables, faucet handles, toilet flush handles, doorknobs, door handles, crash bars, bathroom and kitchen areas, elevator call buttons, and handrails.
- Adhering to safe visitation procedures. We are committed to offering visitation that supports each member's physical, mental, psychosocial well-being, and quality of life. Visitation may be conducted through different means based on the community's structure and members' needs.

**Please know the visitation options may vary based on the community's COVID-19 status. To discuss current visit options and schedule a visit with a loved one, contact [Katie Plendl](mailto:Katie.Plendl@va.gov) at 715-720-6775 or at [Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov](mailto:Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov). Currently as of today, closed window visits and virtual visits are available. No reservation is needed for a closed window visit.**

*Closed Window Visits:* Closed window visits pose no risk of virus transmission.

*Virtual visits:* We encourage loved ones to communicate with members by phone, letters, video chat, and/or social media. We understand that it is hard to not have visitors, especially family. Please contact the community at 715-720-6775 for questions or assistance with these communication methods.

*Compassionate care visits:* Visitors who need to enter the community for compassionate care situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assure safety for all.

*Please note the community will screen visitors for COVID-19 when they arrive for compassionate care visits.*

We are excited to see our members reunite with their loved ones, when able!

- Assuring safe congregate dining and group activities. Communal dining and congregate group activities may be offered while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention. This includes social distancing, face covering, and appropriate hand hygiene by members and staff.

We continue to be in close communications with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials. We are also monitoring new information from the CDC, CMS, and state and local health departments to ensure we are taking the appropriate next steps.

Thank you for your support and understanding; we are all in this together. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Plendl, Director of Admissions and Marketing at 715-720-6775 or [Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov](mailto:Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov) with any questions or concerns you may have.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan M. Corcoran', written in a cursive style.

**Megan M. Corcoran, NHA** | Administrator  
Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls