



Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

Family Updates 3.19.2021

Dear Family and Friends,

As positive cases of COVID-19 continue to decline in senior living and care communities, we're hopeful this is the beginning of the recovery phase of the pandemic. Today, I want to give you an update regarding our current COVID-19 status:

COVID-19 Updates

At the Veterans Home, we have had no new confirmed COVID-19 cases among members or staff in almost seven weeks.

Here is our current and cumulative information:

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Current Active COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	0
Current Active COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	0
Cumulative COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	63 (twenty-four members, thirty-six employees, three contracted individuals)
Cumulative COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	2 (one member, one employee)
Total Recovered:	61 (twenty-one members, thirty-seven employees, three contracted individuals)

Cosmetologist

We were happy to begin offering haircuts and services in our barber & beauty shop starting again this week! All members who wish for hair services will be able to receive them in the coming weeks if they haven't received them already.

Safe Visitation

Over the last several weeks, we have happily witnessed the dramatic decline of COVID-19 cases in senior living and care communities across the nation. Despite this promising development, our team at the Veterans Home remains fully committed to protecting the health and well-being of our members.

With that being said, we are excited to share with you that in response to the success of the COVID-19 vaccines, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) updated their guidance regarding safe visitation procedures.

We are overjoyed to support indoor visitation for all members with exception in the following instances:

- **Members in quarantine due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19** may not participate in indoor visits, despite vaccination status, until they meet the criteria to be released from quarantine.
- **Unvaccinated members** may not participate in indoor visits if Chippewa County's positivity rate is greater than 10% and less than 70% of our members are fully vaccinated.

As we move forward towards safely reopening, please know we will continue prioritizing the physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being and quality of life of our members and team members. Therefore, the Veterans Home will continue practicing key components of our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan, including:

- Encouraging all members and staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine;
- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment, including a well-fitting face covering or mask that covers the mouth and nose;
- Screening and monitoring of members, staff, and visitors for symptoms;
- Using alcohol-based hand rub regularly;
- 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, including maintaining six feet of distance between persons; and
- Assuring safe congregate dining and group activities.

In the event the Veterans Home confirms a positive case of COVID-19 among members or team members, we will temporarily suspend indoor visits while we conduct facility-wide testing to determine the safest next steps.

This revised guidance is a refreshing, much needed step towards safely opening our organization to normal visitation and operations. Everyone is eager to welcome back our friends and families for indoor visits. Please know our team is pleased to accommodate your visits in a way that is appropriate for our physical setting, meets members' needs, and maintains the comfort and safety of all.

To schedule a visit, please go online to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4DAAAB23A0FFC34-veterans> and sign up for your arrival timeslot today! If you need help signing up, please call the receptionist at 715-720-6775. The link to sign up for visits in April will be available next week!

In-Room Visitation Guidelines - Reminders:

- In-room visits can occur any day of the week at any time
- Visits have no time limits
- Each member can have up to 2 guests at a time
 - Please coordinate visits with your family and friends so no more than 2 guests are here per member at a time
- For right now, we have visits available through the end of March. We will have more sign ups per month, so stay tuned for more information
- If you would prefer to have a COVID test prior to your visit, you may get tested on your own or we can do a test for you here
- Well-fitting face masks must be worn by guests and members at all times during the visit
- We will provide guests with a procedural face mask to wear while at the Veterans Home
- We encourage you to maintain your 6 feet of social distance

- However, if two weeks has passed since the member received his/her 2nd COVID vaccine, you may even hold their hand or give them a hug
- If touching occurs, you both must perform hand hygiene before and after touching for safety
- You must still keep 6 feet of distance between you and other members, staff or guests while at the Veterans Home
- You do not need to conduct pre-screening questionnaires before your visit
- Upon arrival, guests need to use our Kiosk to take temperatures and ask necessary screening questions before visiting
- Please sign out at the kiosk before leaving

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov.

Sincerely,
Megan Corcoran

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.

- COVID-19 Vaccination. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best way to protect yourself and others, particularly older adults and those with underlying health conditions who are at increased risk for severe complications. We are encouraging all Veterans Home members and staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Members who are fully vaccinated are more likely to be able to participate in indoor visits with their loved ones. People are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna vaccines), or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine).
- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as directed by CMS guidelines. Staff continues to wear PPE, including masks, eye protection, gloves, and gowns depending on the community's and member specific 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 or the Wisconsin Department of Health's website at 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@dva.wi.gov) at 715-720-6775 or at Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov.

Closed Window Visits: Closed window visits pose no risk of virus transmission. No reservation is needed for a closed window visit.

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 frequent visitors, especially family. Please contact the Activity Department 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.

Indoor Visits: Indoor visits will be offered based on the following guidance and criteria from CMS:

- The care community has had no new onset of COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days and is not currently conducting outbreak testing.
- Visitors must adhere to the core principles of infection control and will be monitored by staff for appropriate mask use, social distancing, and hand hygiene.
- For the safety and well-being of those in the care community, a limited number of visitors are allowed at one time. Currently, two visitors per member can be accommodated. Visits could take place in a common area inside the community that is cleaned and sanitized regularly and between visits or in member rooms. Additionally, the community maintains a calendar that identifies the days, times, and length of potential visits.

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

- 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 with any questions or concerns you may have.

Best,



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