



Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

Exciting Member & Family Updates - Veterans Home 4.28.2021

Dear Family and Friends,

Schedule All Member In-Person Visits

here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4DAAAB23A0FFC34-april>

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COVID-19 Updates:

I'm so proud of the way we've come together as a community to take care of one another during this global pandemic – we really are all in this together.

At the Veterans Home, we have had no new confirmed COVID-19 cases among members or staff in over 12 weeks.

Here is our current and cumulative information:

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)

Weekly Wednesday Updates:

Moving forward, you can expect to receive an update from us on Wednesday of each week regarding the Veterans Home's COVID-19 status. You will be notified more frequently if there are urgent updates or changes.

Exciting Changes:

(Fully Vaccinated = you've received all necessary doses of your COVID-19 Vaccination (depending on brand) AND 2 weeks have passed since the last dose)

There are several important changes that the CDC and CMS have come out with this week, mainly surrounding safe communal dining, group activities, and guest visits. Here are the changes:

1. We are able to reopen communal dining, without social distancing and without masks based on the member's vaccination status
2. We are able to reopen larger group activities and there may be situations where members may not have to wear masks or be socially distanced, depending on individual's vaccination status and situations.

3. Lastly, if the member and guests are fully vaccinated, face masks do not need to be worn while visiting in the member's room.
 - a. Guests will still need to wear masks to and from the member's room.
 - b. Guests need to bring proof of their vaccination status in order for masks not to be worn in the room. Please bring in proof at your next visit, or email your vaccination proof to Katie Plendl at katie.plendl@dva.wi.gov.
 - c. Visits can still occur without vaccinations, but masks must be worn at all times.
 - d. See below for all expectations.
 - e. You still need to sign up online for visits. The link will not change for May visits, so please click here to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4DAAAB23A0FFC34-april>

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
- 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
- Upon arrival, guests need to use our Kiosk to take temperatures and ask necessary screening questions before visiting
- Please go directly to the member's room for the visit
- Mask & Social Distance Expectations for while guests are in member's room:
 - Member Fully Vaccinated + All Guests Fully Vaccinated = No masks need to be worn
 - Member Fully Vaccinated + 1 Guest is Fully Vaccinated + 1 Guest is NOT vaccinated = Everyone must wear masks
 - Member Fully Vaccinated + No Guests are vaccinated = Everyone must wear masks
 - Member NOT Fully Vaccinated + Guests Fully Vaccinated = Everyone must wear masks AND must be socially distanced at all times
 - Member NOT Fully Vaccinated + Guests NOT Vaccinated = Everyone must wear masks AND must be socially distanced at all times
 - Fully vaccinated guests must still wear face masks when not in the member's room
 - Guests need to bring proof of their vaccination status in order for masks not to be worn in the room. Please bring in proof at your next visit, or email your vaccination proof to Katie Plendl, Director of Admissions and Volunteer Services, at katie.plendl@dva.wi.gov
 - We will provide guests with a new procedural face mask to wear while at the Veterans Home
 - If touching occurs, you both must perform hand hygiene before and after touching for safety
 - You must still socially distance from other members, staff or guests while at the Veterans Home
- Staff will assist as needed to ensure member and guest safety
- Please sign out at the kiosk before leaving

Safe In-Room Visits

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.
 - Additionally, unvaccinated members must be quarantined for 14-days after their return to the Veterans Home, if they are off-site for over 24 hours.

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.

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.

To schedule a visit, please go online and sign up for your arrival timeslot today! If you need help signing up, please call the receptionist at 715-720-6775.

Online Sign Up Website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4DAAAB23A0FFC34-april> (Visits are available for May by clicking on this same link)

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).

- 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 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. Instances may occur during group activities and congregate dining when social distancing and masks are not necessary, based on the participants' vaccination status.

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,

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