



State of Idaho
DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES
"Caring for America's Heroes"



BRAD LITTLE
Governor

MARV HAGEDORN
Chief Administrator

Central Support Office
351 Collins Road
Boise, ID 83702
Ph: (208) 780-1300
Fax: (208) 780-1301

September 21, 2020

To Our Valued Residents and Family Members or Representatives:

We are sending this letter in our continuing efforts to keep you informed of the status of our Homes during this unprecedented public health crisis.

Our staff, in all three State Veterans Homes and in our Central Support Office, have been working diligently throughout this crisis to ensure our residents are healthy and safe. To continue doing so, while also improving the experience of our residents, you will notice some changes in our facilities.

Recently the Idaho Division of Veterans Services requested and received funding authorization to retrofit all our State Veterans Homes to better serve our residents and families during this pandemic and any future public health crises. These funds will be used on construction projects at all three Veterans Homes. The retrofit project will replace the temporary structures that have been used for preventative measures in the past few months with permanent structures.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires the screening of all persons entering the facility and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends limiting and monitoring points of entry to the facility and establishing screening stations at all access points. As such, in the coming weeks construction and retrofitting of the three State Veterans Homes will begin to allow for proper COVID-19 screening and/or testing of visitors, contractors, and staff with separate entrances and exits to prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus.

Covered areas will be constructed to screen visitors for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or potential exposure to someone else who has COVID-19 or any other type of virus that may pose a risk to our vulnerable population. This also creates a primary point to provide visitors with an overview of expectations related to COVID-19 prevention and proper source control measures such as regular handwashing/sanitizing, mask utilization, and physical distancing requirements. These screening centers are also necessary, so visitors do not inadvertently bypass the screening process and access the building prior to the necessary precautions being taken.

Additionally, a separate staff screening area/entrance will be constructed that creates an extra level of security to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the State Veterans Homes. This space provides a locker area and changing rooms so staff can change into facility owned employee

scrubs/uniforms to remove the potential transmission of any virus into the facility via contaminated clothing.

Our design plan also includes the addition of a family visitation suite that can be utilized when our facilities are directed to have no visitation orders in place. The rooms will be outfitted with audio systems to allow family members to converse with the resident without risking exposure to outside contaminants. The family room will have a variable pressure mechanical system to ensure no shared air between the partition. This change will help ensure our Veteran residents and families avoid any negative outcomes associated with isolation during CDC and CMS mandated lockdowns during pandemics.

We have an advanced and tight deadline for completing these projects as all construction must be completed prior to December 30, 2020. Please understand, during construction there may be minor inconvenience and disruption due to noise and other associated disturbances. These are temporary and we will do our best to mitigate distress to residents and visitors.

We know this is a difficult time for everyone and we will continue to provide you with updates as they become available. Please know that we are strictly adhering to all directions from the CDC and we will contact you if your loved one is suspected to have or diagnosed with COVID-19.

We also encourage you to call us for updates on the status of your loved one. We understand that you are concerned and will do everything in our power to give you as much information as we can. In doing so, however, please understand that resident, employee, and contractor health information is considered confidential and cannot be disclosed by our agency. As a reminder we have also established a dedicated Update Hotline (208-780-1336) to allow us to easily keep residents, families, and friends up to date. We update this recording at least weekly or more frequently as conditions change.

We appreciate your continued support and trust in us to care for you or your loved one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marv Hagedorn', written over a horizontal line.

Marv Hagedorn
Chief Administrator
Idaho Division of Veterans Services