



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



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Governor

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To Our Valued Residents and Family Members:

With this letter, we are pleased to inform you that we are taking additional measures to heighten our surveillance screening and testing activities to help prevent and limit the transmission of the Coronavirus Disease within our three State Veterans Homes.

Last week, the Boise VA Medical Center (VAMC), on behalf of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, reached out and informed us that recent increases in testing capabilities and kits for COVID-19 provided the VAMC the ability to offer population-based testing of all Veterans and staff at our State Veterans Homes.

Accordingly, we jumped at this opportunity and quickly established a committee, consisting of leadership and medical professionals from both agencies, who are developing the processes and procedures necessary for appropriate implementation. Should there be no delays, it is anticipated that we will be able to begin this process within the next two weeks at all three of our State Veterans Homes.

The test we will be performing has been approved by the FDA to diagnose the presence of SARS-CoV-2 infections (the virus that causes COVID-19). While this test is currently being used to detect the virus in people with symptoms, this test will also detect the virus in asymptomatic individuals. It has been found that a significant number of individuals who have the virus are asymptomatic and, thus, do not show any symptoms. As such, even when the strictest infectious disease control protocols and care are in place, this virus may still be transmitted by asymptomatic carriers.

Although we continue to have no confirmed or suspected cases in any of our facilities, there is the possibility that this type of surveillance testing may identify staff members or residents who are COVID-19 positive. This is why it is so important that we begin this type of routine diagnostic surveillance testing on our most vulnerable residents and those who care for them. By having this type of baseline testing, it will allow us to make better decisions related to isolating, treating, and using PPE in the care of our residents.

We want to assure you that should any of our staff or residents test positive throughout this process, you will be promptly notified. As an added precautionary measure, we have developed a plan to help prevent the risk of continued spread to other residents should we have a confirmed case within any of our Homes.

Please don't hesitate to contact your State Veterans Home Administrator or the Director of Nursing Services, should you have any questions about the administration of this testing.

Thank you for your continued support and trusting in us to care for your loved one.

Sincerely,

Marv Hagedorn
Chief Administrator
Idaho Division of Veterans Services