

Dept. of Veterans Affairs: Continues to limit visitors to Wisconsin Veterans Homes

Posted on Thursday, May 14, 2020

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MADISON — In staying with the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) will continue to limit all medically unnecessary visits to members who reside at the state's 24-hour skilled nursing facilities for veterans. Below is the full statement of WDVA Secretary Mary Kolar:

"In the interest of the health and welfare of our members and staff, we will continue to limit visitors at our Wisconsin Veterans Homes located in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove, in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"At this time, we do not have any diagnosed cases of COVID-19 at our Wisconsin Veterans Homes. I attribute this to the practices we had in place and the protocols we added very early on of which we still adhere to today. Limiting who enters our facilities, temperature screening those who do, and strongly enforcing our infectious disease control procedures are the best tools we have to keeping the virus at bay. We will continue to maintain these practices and protocols.

"While the Safer at Home Order is no longer in effect, we will continue to follow the guidance of the Centers of Disease Control for Long-term Care Facilities and Nursing Homes to restrict all visitation to their facilities except for certain compassionate care reasons, such as end-of-life situations. The ease of spread in a long-term care setting and the severity of illness that occurs in residents with COVID-19 requires our continued diligence in order to prevent the kind of outbreaks that other nursing facilities have experienced.

"We have about 700 members residing at our Wisconsin Veterans Homes. The

residents of these Homes include the population most vulnerable to the coronavirus. Nearly all are over 60 years old and have one or more compromising medical conditions. Others in senior care facilities account for more than one third of the deaths due to COVID-19 in our country.

“Maybe you know one of the members at our Veterans Homes. They are our friends and neighbors who were willing to give their lives for us and our country. They deserve every effort to protect them.”

The Wisconsin Veterans Homes provide 24-hour skilled nursing care to veterans, their spouses, and gold star parents.

- Chippewa Falls is home to 72 individuals.
- King, near Waupaca, is home to nearly 500 individuals.
- Union Grove is home to more than 150 individuals.