

Dear Families,

I wanted to take a few moments to give you an update on our COVID-19 preparedness at VVH. We have completed the setup of our 10-bed isolation unit. This unit will be used for those with acute respiratory illness not just COVID-19 positive Veterans and Members. As of the writing of this letter (April 2, 2020) we do not have any positive Veterans or Members. We have tested 6 Veterans and Members all have come back negative.

We are in regular contact with the Vermont Emergency Management Office and are now receiving medical supplies on a weekly basis. Our receipt of these supplies may change in the future, but we continue to make a weekly request.

Weekly, we participate in a call with SVMC to discuss their plans for the potential surge of COVID-19 positive patients at the hospital. We are invited to participate in calls with the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs that provide a virus update and let us know what federal and state services are available to assist. Additionally, CMS and the CDC provide regular emails and conference calls regarding COVID-19 in long term care. We review each of these documents and address our COVID-19 response plan accordingly.

The Home has received several donations of cloth face masks which we encourage all staff to wear when within 6 feet of our Veterans, Members and each other. We have surgical masks for use when needed for care. We do have N95 masks and will use as deemed appropriate by CDC guidelines and direction of our medical director.

Despite our inability to have group activities our activities department is providing in room activities. As the weather allows our Veterans and Members are getting outside. If you happen to be on VVH property when your loved one is outside the no-visitor rule remains in effect. I know this is hard, but research continues to show that social distancing, especially for those who live at VVH, is the best way to mitigate this virus.

Social Services remains available to set up appointments for Skype, Zoom or Facetime visits with you or if you prefer just a phone call, we can do that as well.

I know there is a lot of fear associated with this virus and we are doing our best to provide answers to the questions we receive, unfortunately there are times when there is no answer to the question and this is frustrating for all involved. We are doing our best to provide information when requested.

We miss you and hope that we will be open to visitors again soon. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,  
Melissa Jackson  
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Chief Executive Officer  
Vermont Veterans' Home