

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions – as of 5/13/2020

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NJDMVA) takes the threat of coronavirus (COVID-19) seriously. In consultation with the New Jersey Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Homes have taken proactive measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. These action steps are outlined in the frequently asked questions below.

Are staff members screened for COVID-19 before entering an NJDMVA facility?

Yes. The NJDMVA is conducting a temperature check of every employee on every shift. Should an employee test positive, that individual will be instructed to self-quarantine or self-isolate at home. NJDMVA will notify all individuals who have been in contact with the individual so that they can self-quarantine, as directed by the Department of Health. The NJDMVA would also monitor residents that have been in contact with the individual.

What happens if a resident shows possible signs of COVID-19 inside a facility?

The NJDMVA has prepared quarantine and medical isolation accommodations for asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals respectively, across its facilities. Based on CMS guidance issued April 2, 2020, known COVID-19 positive residents are not cohorted with known COVID-19 negative residents. Symptomatic residents of unknown status can be cohorted. Residents with no symptoms can be cohorted. Each facility has established areas in the Home to keep cohorted residents together. (*Cohort - a group of people who share a characteristic*)

Does the staff wear masks around the residents?

Staff members are required to wear PPE at all times when around residents.

Is social distancing being enforced throughout NJDMVA facilities?

The Department is taking this issue very seriously and continuously assessing and amending its policies as the CDC and New Jersey Department of Health issue new guidance.

What procedures is the NJDMVA using to keep facilities clean?

All facilities have enhanced sanitization efforts. The Department has also increased access to hand sanitizer, while educating all on CDC guidance on mitigating the spread of germs.

What steps has the Department taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on staff and residents?

- Ensuring proper staffing to maintain the safety and security of its facilities.
- Managing and ensuring the reserve of PPE and disinfecting products.
- Sanitization of our facilities.
- Adhering to social distancing guidance in recreational activities.

How can I contact my loved one while visitation is suspended?

The Department recognizes that families provide critical support and encourages families to call or use a visual chat platform via a cell phone. Residents who are able can still use the computers available in the library.

What steps are you taking to provide adequate staffing?

Department is using many avenues to provide the proper staffing. These include:

NJ Department of Health

The NJDOH portal for health care professionals who want to come back to work has provided more than dozen new hires. NJDOH nurses have been added to the mix of staff on a rotation basis.

New Jersey National Guard

Part of Team DMAVA, more than 150 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen have been assigned to the Paramus and Menlo Park Homes assisting with the care and security of our residents. These future veterans are helping those who wore the uniform in the past, so the nursing staff can focus on the medical needs of the residents.

Veterans Administration

The Federal Department of Veterans Affairs has provided up to 60 nurses, to be divided equally between Paramus and Menlo Park working various shifts.

What is the protocol for testing and treatment of Covid-19 patients.

The homes have always and currently operate in conformance with CDC/NJDOH guidelines as it relates to testing. Testing is performed based on order from the attending physician/Medical Director when he she feels it is necessary to test that resident.