VETERANS

Fargo VA Conference Call on March 31, 2020

Fargo VA Health Care System COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Precautions at Fargo VA

Thank you to every patient, visitor, and employee of the Fargo VA Health Care System for your support of our Veterans as we navigate COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Your support is vital as we move forward.

Information is rapidly changing, but we are prepared for COVID-19 and strong community support is helpful in this effort. We continue in our efforts to provide well-coordinated, safe patient care and we're efficiently screening all patients, visitors, and staff while maintaining our commitment to prevent the spread or infection to our veterans.

If you're a Veteran seeking medical care, call before visiting (701-239-3700) even if you already have an appointment. You can also sign into My HealtheVet (www.myhealth.va.gov/? and send a secure message to your Primary Care Team. You may be able to get diagnosed and receive care through VA telehealth without having to come in at all.

If you're a Veteran coming in for an appointment, plan to leave home earlier than usual to allow time for the screening. Since we have initiated screening, we ask that you do not bring any additional personnel to your outpatient medical appointment unless they are required to assist with your transportation or medical care.

Beginning March 30, 2020, Fargo Veterans Administration Heath Care Services will postpone all routine face-to-face visits. Every effort will be made to see the patient through a virtual modality such as VA Video Connect, so you can connect with your VA care teams from anywhere, without traveling and exposing yourself, your family, and other Veterans to COVID-19. Learn to use VA Video Connect, available from the VA mobile app store, or by contacting your VA care team before urgent problems arise: https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect (https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect)

The Fargo VA HCS has initiated a COVID-19 Call Center to help field calls related to COVID-19 symptoms, testing, and general questions. The number is (701) 239-3700 extension 2319. The Call Center will be staffed seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Everyone who enters the VA Medical Center or a VA outpatient clinic will be screened. As mentioned, please call ahead even if you have an appointment and especially if you have traveled recently or you have a fever or worsening cough or shortness of breath. It's important to keep in mind, per CDC guidance and VA protocols, individuals know to be at risk for a COVID-19 infection will be immediately isolated to prevent potential spread to others.

There will be two screening location at the Fargo VA Medical Center – the north main entrance and the south corridor that connects the Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office and the medical center. All VA community based outpatient clinics have one entrance (their main entrance) where individuals will be screened.

Currently, the screening consists of three questions:
What is the purpose of your visit today?
Do you have a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, body aches, or fatigue?
Have you been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of coronavirus?
After the questions, a screener will take your temperature.

The Fargo VA HCS is also updating COVID-19 (Coronavirus) visitor precautions. Only one visitor/companion per Veteran is allowed in our facilities for Veterans who require assistance for outpatient visits. Also, the Fargo VA HCS is not allowing visitors into any inpatient units to include the Community Living Center. No outside visitors will be permitted to see inpatient Veterans. The only exceptions will be in compassionate cases, when Veterans are in their last stages of life on hospice units. In those cases, visitors will be limited to a specific Veteran's room only.

We are very sensitive to the separation this restriction causes our patients and their loved ones, but this measure of protection is essential at this time to keep people safe. In the rare cases where visitors are allowed, only visitors without COVID-19 (Coronavirus) symptoms will be permitted to enter our facilities. No Visitors under the of 18 are permitted, including infants. We know this restriction may be difficult for some, but we thank all of our visitors and Veterans for helping us protect the safety of everyone within our facilities. It's important to keep in mind that while there are currently several visitor restrictions, access will be determined on a case-by-case decision where the visitor is critical to the care of the Veteran.

Everyone is encouraged to take every day preventative actions to avoid being exposed to the virus: Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Stay home if you are sick or becoming sick. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. If you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with symptoms, call the VA before going to the facility.

The Fargo VA is also asking everyone who sews to make and donate surgical masks to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). https://buttoncounter.com/2018/01/14facemask-a-picture-tutorial/ . Donations can be sent to the Fargo VA (2101 Elm St. N. Fargo, ND 58102 attn: Voluntary Service. If you have any question. call the Fargo VA Voluntary Service Department at 701-239-3700 extension 3395.

To keep yourself up-to-date on current COVID-19 (Coronavirus) information in the Fargo VA Health Care System visit our website at www.fargo.va.gov (http//www.fargo.va.gov/) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

We appreciate everyone's patience and support as we prepare for and respond to the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

If there are any question please call (701) 477-8985 (Home) or (701) 278-0631

Thank You

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