



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

Newsletter

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Post 154 Mission Statement

The American Legion Post 154 is a patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness to support Veterans and the Community at large. We are committed to mentoring and sponsorship of youth programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members, veterans, and their families in our communities. Our success depends entirely on active membership, participation and volunteerism. This organization belongs to the people it serves and the community in which it thrives.

Commander:

VOTE!

"I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed, a democracy in a republic, a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

The America's Creed - Written 1917, accepted by the U.S. House of Representatives on April 3, 1918.

Did you know that the American Legion encourages all Americans to register and to vote in all elections? Legionnaires have traditionally responded to the call and are among the groups of individuals most likely to cast their ballots on Election Day.

Americans have the right to vote for whom they choose to represent them in our representative form of government. They also have the duty, and responsibility, to use their right to vote and to familiarize themselves with the candidates and the issues that are up for decision on Election Day.

Every election is important, as the individuals elected to office will establish laws under which we must live, and they will make important decisions for spending the tax dollars we pay to our government.

Citizens must be reminded that good government is established when informed and concerned citizens participate in the electoral process. They must understand what is expected of them, and they must know clearly and simply how to go about doing it. Each year we elect public officials whose decisions directly influence the lives and well-being of all citizens. The benefits derived from voting are produced by electing officials that are in tune with the wishes of the citizens and their concerns in providing a community, state and nation in which it is suitable to live, work and raise a family. Please vote!

We didn't have an October General Membership meeting due to concerns with the latest numbers of Covid in Kootenai County. I asked for a vote from your executive committee and we voted to cancel our October meeting. Bummer! We will watch the numbers and see what November looks like and see if we can work around Thanksgiving. I was thinking about having a Zoom General Membership meeting if we can't meet in person. Please let me know what you think.

2021 Legion dues are now due and can be paid online, in-person, or by mail. Everyone is a recruiter, and the Post needs your support. Ask qualified veterans to join the American Legion and continue supporting Defense, Americanism, Veterans, and Youth.

Please tune into our Virtual Veterans Recognition Event that will be live streamed on November 7th. This year we are recognizing "Women in the Service." Also, remember Veterans Day which is a time for us to pay our respects to those who have served. For one day, we stand united in respect for you, our veterans.

This holiday started as a day to reflect upon the heroism of those who died in our country's service and was originally called Armistice Day.

It fell on Nov. 11th because that is the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I.

However, in 1954, the holiday was changed to "Veterans Day"; in order to account for all veterans in all wars.

For God and Country,

- Dee Sasse, Commander



Finance Officer:

During the month of October, the Post incurred \$238.34 in expenses. The majority of these expenses were for membership expenses and expenses associated with our Veterans Recognition virtual event. Income totaled \$134.00. The majority of this income came from flag sales and a donation to the Honor Guard from the family member of a deceased Veteran for which the Honor Guard provided military honors. Our net income for the month of October was a loss of \$104.34. We also received a donation from Mike McPhail in the form of two \$50 gift cards which he won from STCU. We used those funds to provide gift cards to our First Responders. – Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Legislative Chairman:

VA Debt Relief for Disaster-Impacted Veterans: VA announced that it will be extending debt relief to veterans who have been impacted by natural disasters. “Veterans and their families should be focused on their health and safety during the natural disasters,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA is taking action to give those with pending debts greater flexibility during these challenging times.” VA can suspend debt collection action for up to 90 days or extend repayment terms on pre-existing debts.

VA Notifies Veterans of Compromised Data: The VA Office of Management announced on Sept. 14th that there had been a personal information data breach of approximately 46,000 veterans. VA’s Financial Services Center (FSC) is alerting the affected individuals, including the next-of-kin of those who are deceased. The department is also offering access to credit monitoring services, at no cost, to those whose social security numbers may have been compromised. Veterans are advised to follow the instructions in the letter from FSC to protect their data. There is no action needed from veterans if they did not receive an alert by mail, as their personal information was not involved in the incident. Any questions should be directed to the FSC Customer Help Desk at VAFSCVeteransSupport@va.gov, or by mail to the VA FSC Help Desk, Attn: Customer Engagement Center, P.O. Box 149971, Austin, TX 78714-9971.

VA Caregiver Assistance Program: On October 1st the first phase of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) went live on VA’s website. PCAFC offers education and training, access to health care insurance, mental health counseling, financial stipends, respite care, among other benefits for caregivers who care for an eligible veteran. As part of the *VA MISSION Act of 2018*, PCAFC will expand in two phases. The first phase is for caregivers of veterans who were injured in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. The second phase is for those injured in the line of duty between May 7, 1975, and Sept. 10, 2001, which go into effect Oct. 1, 2020.

VA Can Assist Veterans Resolve Community Care Debts: VA’s Office of Community Care (OCC) contact center can help veterans fix issues with credit reports or debt collection actions that are the result of an authorized VA community care claim. Once a veteran contacts VA’s OCC contact center, with their information regarding debt collection, staff will work one-on-one with the veteran to research and resolve collection-specific issues. [Contact VA Office of Community Care.](#)

Retirees and Dependents to get new military ID Cards: Military family members, retirees and their family members and certain others will get new ID cards as they renew or replace their IDs over the next five years. It will be similar to the common access card used by military personnel and DoD personnel, without the chip. The change applies to well over 5 million people with ID cards who are non-CAC holders, with the largest populations affected being military retirees, and dependents of active duty and retirees. But unless your ID card is about to expire, there’s no need to rush to get the new card, especially during this era of pandemic when officials don’t want ID card offices flooded with people. (cont. below)

You have time — the transition to the Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification Card is expected to be completed in January 2026, according to Michael Sorrento, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center, in a briefing. In the meantime, the old cards will continue to work.

The new ID card has the same technology, and the same kind of lamination as the CAC has, making it much more durable. The new cards have enhanced security features to reduce the likelihood that the cards could be compromised.

TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee to Start Jan. 1st: DOD announced that TRICARE Select Group A retirees will be required to pay an enrollment fee beginning on Jan. 1, 2021.

Congress directed the *Defense Health Agency in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017* to implement TRICARE Select retiree enrollment fees but delayed the implementation. Group A is comprised of retirees and their family members if the sponsor's initial enlistment or appointment occurred before Jan. 1, 2018. The enrollment fee is waived for medically retired individuals and their family members, and for survivors of active-duty deaths.

During the TRICARE Open Season, which will run from Nov. 9th to Dec. 14th, beneficiaries must set up an allotment with their regional contractors for the enrollment fee to begin on Jan. 1, 2021. Beneficiaries who do not set up their allotment by the deadline will be unenrolled due to nonpayment and will have 90 days from the termination date to request reinstatement.

Women Veterans and VA Benefits: Women veterans are the fastest growing veteran demographic. A wide variety of VA benefits are available to eligible women veterans. These benefits include disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and burial. VA also has Center for Women Veterans, Women Veteran Coordinators, health care for women veterans, and benefits for survivors of military sexual trauma. [Women Veterans Call Center](#) can assist with further information through their [online chat](#), text, or call 1.855.VA.WOMEN.

VA #FightFlu Initiative: VA has expanded the options eligible veterans have on where they can receive a seasonal no-cost flu shot. Veterans can now receive a standard-dose or high-dose flu shot at their local VA health care facility, in-network community retail pharmacy, or an urgent care location. If you are eligible, you only need to present a valid, government-issued ID at a covered location.

GET YOUR FLU SHOT NOW! PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES!!

- Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman



Chaplain's Pew:

PRAYER FOR AN END TO THE VIRUS

Almighty and merciful Father, who show your love to all creation.

We come before you asking for a quick control of the Corona virus currently ravaging our world.

Hear graciously the prayers we make for those affected by the virus in various parts of the world.

Grant healing to the sick, eternal life to the dead and consolation to the bereaved families.

We pray that an effective medicine to combat the sickness be speedily found.

We pray for the relevant governments and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people.

Look upon us in your mercy and forgive us our failings.

In your mercy, Lord, grant us the strength to rebuild when all seems lost and the courage to reach out to those in pain.

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

In your name we pray. Amen.

- Helen Kinder, Chaplain

Sick Call:

- Post member Larry Carstensen and his wife Char were both diagnosed with covid-19. Larry spent a few days in the hospital. Both are home recovering now.
- Member Tim Williams' wife Sandy was just diagnosed with covid. So far, Tim has tested negative.

Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.



Literary Corner:

Oh, give me fifty-two
degrees,
It's much less hot - I will not
freeze.
I do not like the ninety fours.
It's much too hot for outdoor
chores.

Dry up, all you garden peas!
Go away, you nasty bees!
I'm ready to close up my
screen door.
I'm done with summer -
yikes! No more!

So come on, fall, give me
some leaves....
But wait - oh no - I have to
sneeze....
Did you say flu? Do I see
snow?
This is too much...I have to
go....

Submitted by Ruth Aresvik
October 2020



WHY WE NEED “BUDDY CHECKS”.

As we see an upswing in the number of COVID-19 cases throughout our nation, it is perhaps more important now than ever before that we perform our Buddy Checks on a more frequent basis. The idea is to connect with veterans who may need assistance.

The American Legion Family already reaches out to fellow Legionnaires, but it's not enough to simply pick up the phone and call the veterans you know. It is important that we check on All Veterans in our area to be sure they are safe and healthy. If we hear of someone in need, we can offer someone a ride, deliver groceries, or just be there for them.

There are some people who will not ask for help. If you know veterans in your area, reach out and offer your assistance to them. Please, also pay attention to senior citizens as this is part of our population most susceptible to the effects of the virus.

You may have recently read about a local veteran who passed away, and it was a veteran neighbor that was concerned when he had not seen or heard from him, who called 911 and the police came to check and found him deceased. This is an example of someone noticing a small change in routine. Obviously, it is extremely helpful.

What is important is that “Buddy Checks” let the veterans in our community know we care and are there to provide assistance. It is what we do.

If anyone would like to join our Buddy Check Calling Team, I will be greatly appreciated. Give me a call at 208-661-6850 or email me at wakinder74@gmail.com. - Bill Kinder, 1st Vice Commander

Did you know...?

Mann-Grandstaff VAMC is the first in the nation to convert to the new Health Management Portal. Find out what you need to know beginning on page 10 of this newsletter. Don't ignore this change. It affects how you can refill prescriptions, make appointments, send secure messages, share your records, & more.

Bits & Pieces

- Please remember to send your volunteer hours to Len Crosby so he can compile them. These include hours devoted to Veterans, Youth, Honor Guard and Community. His email is: crosbylenmary@frontier.com
- This is one of those videos that you don't want to end. Incredible beauty and very well produced. Use full computer screen for better viewing. Click on link to watch video... [Colorado By Drone from DAVID on Vimeo](#)

Service Officer:

Happy November to you all. It's time to put away the lawn mowers and start thinking about turkey and pumpkin pie! And you've already changed the time on your clocks...but have you replaced the batteries in your smoke alarms? If you are elderly and/or physically challenged and need help -- have tall ceilings? Don't want to climb that ladder? Contact your local fire department and make an appointment. They will come to your home to complete this task. You must supply all batteries.

Blue Water Alert! The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced completion to digitize declassified deck logs to process claims faster for eligible Vietnam-era veterans. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard deck logs within National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) contain helpful information being used to validate claims for Blue Water Navy (BWN) veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam, to establish presumption to herbicide exposure for service-connected disability benefits.

Data contained in deck logs is used when deciding VA benefit claims. Also known as ship logs or captain's logs, information was manually inputted to chronologically document the daily activities of a navy ship or unit. VA provided the digital images of deck logs to NARA, available in the National Archives Catalog. "Through this scanning project, VA contractors digitized declassified Navy and Coast Guard deck logs from 1956-1978 in NARA's holdings, including the log of the hospital ship USS Sanctuary which I served aboard during the Vietnam conflict," said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero. "As a veteran from this era, I recognize the unprecedented value this provides to veterans making these logs easily accessible online."

Digitization of all available Navy deck logs for ships that served in Vietnam were completed in December 2019, while Coast Guard deck logs were completed in September. Veterans, dependents, and surviving spouses may contact approved Veterans Service Organizations for assistance in filling a claim.

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is for eligible Veterans who have incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975 or on or after September 11, 2001. This program provides resources, education, support, a financial stipend, and health insurance (if eligible), beneficiary travel (if eligible), to caregivers of eligible Veterans.

Veterans may be eligible for this clinical program if they:

Sustained or aggravated a serious injury serious injury (now includes serious illness) in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975 or on or after 9/11/2001; and meet both of the following criteria to be eligible for PCAFC. Among other applicable eligibility criteria, the Veteran must:

- Have a single or combined service-connected disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of 70% or more. This requirement is included in the definition of "serious injury;" and
- Be in need of personal care services (requiring in-person personal care services) for a minimum of six continuous months based on any one of the following:
 - an inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL)
 - a need for supervision, protection, or instruction.

For more information on these changes, please see [Fact Sheet](#).

How do I apply for this program?

You and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in an application process to determine if you're eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. You'll both need to sign and date the application and answer all questions for your role.

You can apply online right now. (cont. below)

[Apply for the program of comprehensive caregiver assistance](#)

You can also apply:

By mail

Fill out a joint Application for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (VA Form 10-10CG).

[Download VA Form 10-10CG \(PDF\)](#)

Mail the form and any supporting documents to:

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road NE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647

In person

Bring your completed VA Form 10-10CG to your local VA medical center's Caregiver Support Coordinator. To find the name of your local coordinator, you can:

Go to the VA [Caregiver Support Coordinator directory](#), or

Contact the [Caregiver Support Line](#) at 855-260-3274

Do not send medical records along with the application. VA will follow up after the application is received. If you need assistance with completing the application or would like to check the status of your 1010CG application please call 1-855-488-8440, option 3.

What services does this program offer?

If approved, Veterans can select one (1) primary (main) caregiver and up to two (2) secondary caregivers. Secondary caregivers serve as a backup support to the primary caregiver when needed. The services you receive will depend on whether you are the primary or secondary caregiver. **If you are the primary caregiver, you may receive:**

- A monthly stipend (paid directly to you as the caregiver.)
- Access to health care insurance through Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), if you do not already have health insurance.
- Mental health counseling.
- Certain beneficiary travel benefits when traveling with the Veteran to appointments. Note for specific details, speak to your Caregiver Support Coordinator.
- At least 30 days of respite care per year, for the Veteran. Respite is short term relief for someone else to care for the Veteran while you take a break.

If you are the secondary caregiver, you may receive:

- Mental health counseling.
- Certain beneficiary travel benefits when traveling with the Veteran to appointments. Note for specific details, speak to your Caregiver Support Coordinator.
- At least 30 days of respite care, per year for the Veteran. Respite is short term relief for someone else to care for the Veteran while you take a break.

Be sure to check www.caregiver.va.gov for updates or [subscribe](#) to receive email updates and information about VA Caregiver Support Program services.

Also...

Please be advised that the VA has recently changed the way they do **Direct Deposit Enrollment**. Prior to Oct 13, 2020, your local Veterans Service Office was able to fill out a form and send it in on behalf of the veteran or family members. However, you must call 1-877-838-2778 number to request changes. – Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer

Editor's Note: You'll find a fillable enrollment form [here](#).



Can you believe it is already November??? Where has this year gone? We still have quite a few members that have not renewed for 2021. There are 58 members that have yet to renew. Please keep in mind that if dues are not into National by December 31, 2020, members will be automatically suspended. Please take a few minutes and get your dues paid soon.

I suggest you pay online as this is the fastest and easiest way to process your dues. All you need is your Legion ID number and your credit card. It takes nine days to process dues when you send them into the post. When you go to www.legion.org/renew, you are processed the same day.

Our numbers have been ok, but we are still short of our goal. Please do not wait until the last minute.

Again, I remind all of you to try recruiting at least one new member before Dec. 31st. We need to continue to grow our post membership each year.

Bill Kinder, 1st Vice Commander Membership Chairman.



Welcome to the new members who have recently joined our Post 154 Family. I know it has been rather frustrating by not being able to greet all of you, without having our regularly scheduled meetings. Please understand we do not want to compromise any of our members, especially with the increasing number of COVID cases. Hopefully, we will be back to live meetings every month.

Here are the names of the folks that have joined us since the start of the 2021 membership year, either through transfers from other posts or are brand new members. The transfers are: Nick Craft, Lenn Barney, James Bern, Charles Davis, Chris Kelley, Howard West, JT Strong, Dewey Berndt, and Don Ward. New members include Kristine Marin and Geoff Richardson.

When you see these folks, say hello and make them truly welcome. - Bill Kinder, 1st Vice Commander

Training Officer:

The four pillars of the American Legion continue this month with...

Pillar 2: National Security. This aspect of the American Legion's foundation is particularly relevant right now. Read the complete article to understand the position of YOUR American Legion.

To those who have sworn with their lives to protect America against enemies near and far, national security is a deeply held value. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 exposed this nation's vulnerabilities and magnified the importance of this value - not only for military veterans, but for all Americans. Since then, The American Legion has passed national resolutions supporting and reconfirming its support for the Global War on Terrorism and for all who have critical responsibilities in fighting it: the White House; Congress; departments of Defense, State and Homeland Security; and, foremost, the troops and civilians protecting U.S. interests at home and abroad from terrorist acts.

The American Legion's national security position is multi-faceted. Key aspects include:

- **Ensuring a well-funded, well-equipped and well-trained military.**
- **Focusing awareness and surveillance on rogue nations, terrorist groups and global threats to U.S. security around the world.**
- **Supporting the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and urging its steadfast protection of U.S. borders, ports, and other entry points.**
- **Enabling a decent quality of life for troops and their families – active duty and reserve-component alike – that includes reasonable compensation, benefits, health care, childcare, and family support programs.**
- **Providing an efficient and compassionate healing and transition program for wounded, ill or injured warriors.**

Also, within the Legion's national security pillar is the Foreign Relations Commission that works closely with the Department of State to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts around the world, and to advance the goals of U.S. foreign policy.

The American Legion's national security positions include these key areas:

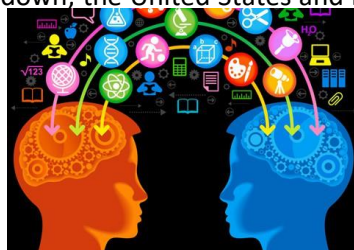
Strong National Defense

A strong, adequately funded U.S. military is essential for global peace and prosperity in the 21st century. As the world's sole superpower, the United States must be able to deter aggression while maintaining the ability to fight and win wars when necessary. Our adversaries should have no doubt about America's resolve and means to respond with overwhelming force when national interests are threatened. Today, however, with the United States facing mounting debt obligations and unprecedented deficit projections, the defense budget has become an easy target. Nevertheless, The American Legion opposes any further decreases in U.S. defense spending.

"Ever-increasing entitlement spending is putting pressure on key spending priorities such as national defense, a core constitutional function of government. Defense spending has declined significantly over time, even when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are included, as spending on the three major entitlements — Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid — has more than tripled." While the Iraq War is over and the Afghanistan War is winding down, the United States and its allies still face a dangerous and unstable world.

Read complete article [here](#).

- Jean Bledsoe, Training Officer



Changes to VA's Online Health Management Portals.

Beginning on Oct. 24, 2020, Veterans receiving care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center (VAMC) will transition to a new electronic health record system (EHR). This includes a new way to manage your health care online, called My VA Health. This new health management portal complements My HealtheVet for managing care at the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) in:

- Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
- Libby, Montana
- Sandpoint, Idaho
- Wenatchee, Washington

Editor's Note: The following information is excerpted from **Changes to VA's Online Health Management Portals**. If you follow the login instructions below you should have no trouble getting into the new patient portal. Just be patient during your learning curve. There are several reference links at the end of page 13 to help.

Here's how Veterans can use VA online tools to manage their care

Veterans will continue to use VA.gov to:

- Sign in to access My HealtheVet and My VA Health
- Change their contact information and addresses on file with VA for their health care and other VA benefits
- Schedule, review and cancel appointments for VA health facilities other than the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics
- Apply for and manage other VA benefits
- Schedule, review and cancel community care appointments

Veterans will continue to use My HealtheVet to:

- Manage their health records and prescription refills for any VA health facilities other than the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics
- Access their past secure messages from before this transition

Veterans will now use My VA Health to:

- Schedule, review and cancel appointments at the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics
- Refill and renew medications prescribed by providers at the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics
- Send secure messages to their VA providers at the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics
- Manage their current health care records connected to care at the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and community-based outpatient clinics

Logging in to My VA Health

You will sign in to access My VA Health at <https://www.va.gov/?next=%2Fmy-va%2F>

You can sign in with any of these three accounts:

- **Premium DS Logon** account
- **Premium My HealthVet** account
- **Verified ID.me Account**

Then you can pick the health tool you'd like to use (like Secure Messaging). Note: If you have a Basic or Advanced My HealthVet account, you should first upgrade your account to Premium status by going to <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/premium>. Select the link for the step-by-step guide to learn how to upgrade your account to Premium.

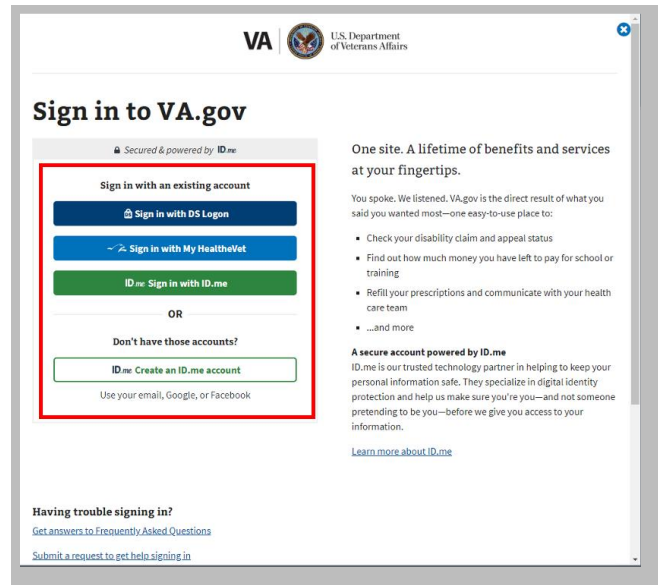


Figure 1: VA.gov

There are three different ways for you to log in to My VA Health: ID.me, **Premium DS Logon** or your **Premium My HealthVet** account as shown below.

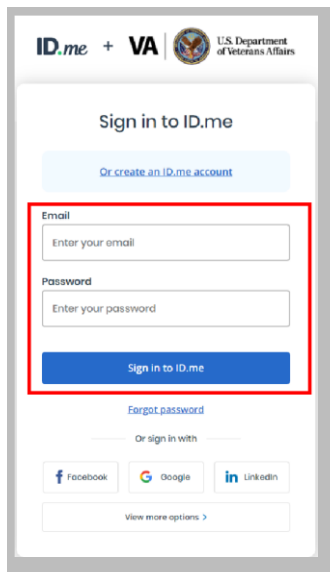


Figure 2: ID.me Option

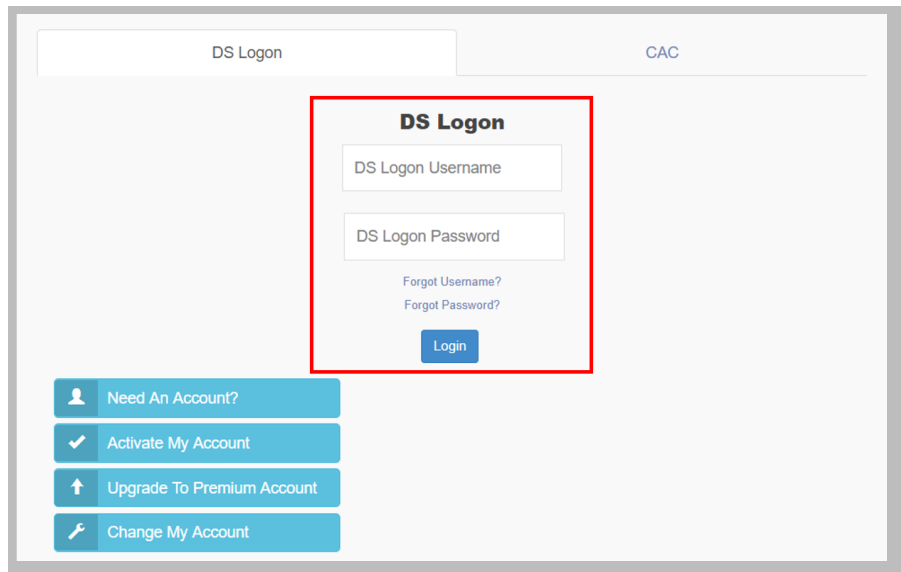


Figure 3: DS Logon Option

If you would like to access My VA Health using a **Premium** account, [and you don't already have a premium account] you will need to upgrade your account.

- You can upgrade, in person at your VAMC or VA outpatient clinic. Please contact your local My HealtheVet coordinator if you have questions. You may also upgrade your account online using [ID.me](#) or [DS Logon](#). Both ways are outlined in this [user guide](#).

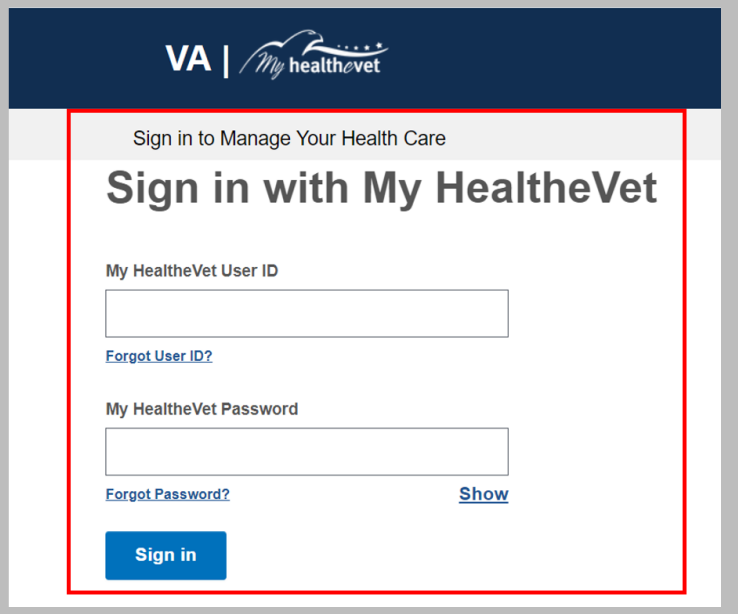


Figure 4: My HealtheVet Option

Find the full reference guide to the new patient portal here:

<https://www.spokane.va.gov/docs/EHRMVeteranGuideToMyVAHealth.pdf>

The quick start guide is here:

https://www.spokane.va.gov/docs/EHRM_MyVAHealthQuickStart.pdf

And the Veterans Fact Sheet is here:

<https://www.spokane.va.gov/docs/EHRMVeteranFactSheet.pdf>

8 Resources

1. Learn more about a My HealtheVet **Premium** account at www.myhealth.va.gov/premium
2. Read more about VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) at www.ehrm.va.gov
3. See more about My VA Health at the Mann-Grandstaf VAMC at www.spokane.va.gov/services/ehrm.asp
4. Access www.va.gov
5. Access My HealtheVet: www.myhealth.va.gov
6. Access My VA Health: <https://patientportal.myhealth.va.gov>



Post 154 Honor Guard:

For those of you not aware, our Post has an Honor Guard. They march in parades, present the colors at ceremonies, and most importantly, provide a rifle salute to honor Veterans at their funerals. Starting this month there will be an account of the honors and hours given by the men and women in our Honor Guard. However, more members are always needed to serve in this capacity. If you are interested in participating in this very fulfilling activity, contact Harold Markiewitz at 208-691-3039.

The Post 154 Honor Guard provided the following services during October:

- Memorial for a navy SEAL on a mountain south of Coeur d’Alene
- Posted Colors for the District 1 meeting



Mark Your Calendar:

November 1st Daylight Savings Time Ends. Turn your clocks back.

November 3rd Election Day – VOTE

November 10th Marine Corps Birthday

November 11th Veterans Day

November 12th Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting

November 16th American Education Week

November 22nd National Family Week

November 25th Thanksgiving



A Healthier You:

Everyone is getting tired of hearing about the novel corona virus, but the numbers for covid-19 in Kootenai County are increasing, flu season is here, and the risk is still very high, especially for our members.

Here are reference links provided by Kootenai Health regarding the corona virus:

- [Think you may have COVID-19? What to do.](#)
- [Getting Tested – Hours, Site and Driving Instructions](#)
- [Clean and Safe and Ready for You – Don’t put off your health care](#)
- [Masking and Visitor Policies – Restrictions in place](#)
- [Hope for Heroes](#)

And now a message from our supportive friends at the Rathdrum Lions Club...



Rathdrum Lions Club

Serving the community since 1947



To the fabulous members of Post 154,

With the covid-19 health restrictions, the Lions had to cancel our major fund raisers. The good side (if there is one) is it allowed us to work on the clubhouse and grounds. The building has been painted, reroofed and snow guards attached. The entrance locks have been rekeyed and five keys given to Commander Dee. The three steel stoves with grills have been recycled and a new gas griddle and stove have been put in. A new hot water tank has been installed and we now have Wi-Fi.

Post 154 can put up a sign to let people know this is the home of Post 154. It can be placed anywhere that will not block our sign. Spring of 2021 will see streetlights and traffic lights go in at the Meyer Rd/Hwy 53 intersection. Meyer Road will be widened and paved along the cemetery. Not sure when.

A Lions Committee was formed to see what can be done with our property so Post 154 can have their own building.

Lonnie Morse, Director
Rathdrum Lions Club





Editor's Note: Ruth Aresvik, a veteran and member of American Legion Post 154, joined the Navy in September 1969. She went to boot camp and Yeoman School in Bainbridge MD. She was stationed at Ft. Myer VA and worked at the Pentagon for Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Zumwalt as receptionist and general clerical duties. She helped with courier runs to the CIA and served as part of the Honor Guard when Elliott Richardson was installed as Secretary of Defense. Honorably discharged in August 1973, Ruth now serves as the Service Officer for Post 154 and a member of the Post Honor Guard – and one of our resident authors. She wrote the following story to honor her uncle and all veterans on Veterans Day.

Honor To A Veteran - by Ruth Aresvik

I come from an overflowing boatful of Navy relatives: my grand uncle, Pop, three uncles, one aunt, two cousins, and four nephews - one currently serving active duty. So, no surprise...a significant spark was created during my youth, leading me towards the same path. And Uncle Herb was a big part of this.

Herbert Emmett Stiles was born in Grenola, Kansas, on December 2, 1917, moving to Filer, Idaho, in October 1929. He had an older brother Harold, and three younger sisters: Dorothy, Maxine (my mother), and Donna Faye. The family grew up poor and humble. Herb delivered groceries and newspapers via his motorcycle. He loved to fish and hunt with his dad. At the age of 22, Herb joined the Navy - 11 September 1939 - earning a monthly allotment of \$5.46 during San Diego boot camp. His first ship duty was on a destroyer, the USS Childs, with his main occupation (NAVPERS 609) listed as "sailor". When the United States declared war on Japan in December 1941, Herb was aboard the USS Marblehead, a light cruiser. On February 4, 1942, the Marblehead was crippled by Japanese bombers in the Java Sea, Indian Ocean. With a nine-foot hole in her hull, thirty four compartments flooded, steering and electrical power reduced, the Marblehead would sail for 89 days and over 20,000 miles to New York for repairs. Herb would go on to serve on the USS Pilot and USS Invade before the end of the war. It was during shore leave from the USS Invade, May 29, 1945 - victory in the air - when Herb and several fellow sailors missed the boat "confined by shore patrol due to the excessive use of intoxicants". This would not be the only time Uncle Herb would be subject to a JAG letter in his service record. He did enjoy his beer with buddies!

Herb attended Yeoman school in 1951, and had various duty in Chicago, Seattle, New Orleans, California, Texas, and Virginia. He went on to serve the seas on the USS Alstede, USS Romulus, USS Eldorado, and, finally, the USS Hamner. In a letter to Herb, dated May 11, 1942, his dad Floyd wrote: "I am so dammed (sic) glad that you are back, you should get out in the country some place, take off your shoes and dig your toes in the good old American soil and thank your lucky stars and stripes that you are alive". Herb's reply "Take good care of my gun and fishing rod so I can use them when I come home". And like so many American families, his mama Ruth would sit many nights around the radio to hear news during the war. From her letter dated June 13, 1940, she wrote: "How does the war news sound over there? Some claim it will be over by July 1st..." What heartache she and other Americans must have felt when Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941.

Special memories of Uncle Herb remain in my heart. He always brought gifts - silk pajamas from China, an Oriental music jewelry box, a tea set (that I inherited). At age 9, gifts were a huge highlight. When he'd pull his motorcycle into the driveway for a visit, he was looking mighty fine in his Navy blues. Was that my spark??

Uncle Herb gave 20 years and 13 days to his country. He was released from active duty on September 26, 1959, with \$175 pay. Going through letters, photos, and his enlisted service record has been pure joy. I see his inked signature on his original DD214. In his record, a standard leave form dated 19 JUL 1955, made me smile - the same form I recall filling out for leave in 1970. Uncle Herb was but one of the many

heroes who served during World War II, coming from the Greatest Generation, accepting orders as was his duty, performing said duties as was expected.

A family backyard bar-b-que, burgers grilling and children laughing...a holiday parade, flags waving and horns honking...a Sunday church service - a Bible reading and choirs singing. Casting a fishing line. Casting a ballot. Freedoms and rights we have and must never forget due to the sacrifice of our military.

Thank you, Uncle Herb for your service.



First photo - Dorothy, Floyd, Ruth, Herb, Maxine, Harold; Donna Faye in front





Kootenai Health put together a document to help address questions, rumors and myths we have heard circulating regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your continued support of our health care community during these challenging times.

Finances:

1. Does Kootenai Health get money for identifying a positive COVID-19 case?

No. Kootenai Health does not receive money as the result of positive COVID-19 lab results. Kootenai Health is providing community drive through testing as a public service. The lab testing fees charged for these tests do not cover the cost to run the center.

2. Why do people say Kootenai Health is making extra money due to COVID-19 case numbers?

It's hard to know how rumors get started. At the beginning of COVID-19, many hospitals canceled non-urgent procedures to make sure they had patient rooms available to care for COVID-19 patients and to conserve personal protective equipment, PPE. All hospitals received federal stimulus money during the shutdown to help maintain baseline operations without non-urgent surgical revenue. Kootenai Health also received some stimulus funding because of its status as a rural referral center. Early on in the pandemic some hospitals in "hot spots" received additional stimulus funds because they were severally impacted by COVID-19 patients. Kootenai Health did not receive a hot spot stimulus.

It's also important to note that the stimulus money Kootenai Health has received to date does not equal the amount of income lost due to the ongoing pandemic.

3. Is there a federal bounty given to Kootenai Health for identifying positive cases?

No.

4. I've heard hospitals are "padding the numbers" of COVID-19 cases to get more federal funding, is that true?

No. Falsifying data about patient diagnoses would be illegal and unethical. It would also mean our 3,500 employees and physicians have collectively agreed to put their professional reputations on the line by providing false information. This is not happening.

Viruses and Masks:

5. How can a mask help if viruses are so small?

Viruses are very small. However, viruses don't move on their own, they must be transmitted in some way. The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is transmitted in droplets that come through the nose and mouth. Using a mask creates a barrier that greatly decreases the potential to transmit droplets that could be carrying virus. If everyone wears a mask, we can keep everyone's germs (droplets) to themselves.

6. Can people get sick from increased carbon dioxide intake while wearing a mask?

No. There is enough filtration of air through a mask that wearers do not have increased carbon dioxide intake. Viruses, although very small, are much larger than molecules of oxygen or carbon dioxide which will readily pass through masks.

Surgeons and nurses regularly wear masks for long periods of time as part of their normal work. While it may take time to get used to, and may be uncomfortable, we are all doing our part to keep each other safe. You may want to experiment with different styles and types of masks to see which is best for you.

7. I have heard masks don't work, is that true?

CDC provides information on how masking helps prevent the transmission of respiratory illness.

Wearing a mask has long been used to help prevent the spread of respiratory illness such as tuberculosis and the pneumonic plague.

Masking helps us keep our germs to ourselves. A study examines how mandatory mask wearing in Wuhan, China, Italy and New York City helped reduce the spread.

8. Why weren't masks recommended at the start of the pandemic?

According to the CDC, at the beginning of the pandemic experts didn't know the extent to which people with COVID-19 could spread the virus before symptoms appeared. Nor was it known that some people have COVID-19 but don't have any symptoms. Both groups can unknowingly spread the virus to others. These discoveries led public health groups to reconsider the use of face masks. The World Health Organization and the CDC now include face masks in their recommendations for slowing the spread of the virus. The CDC recommends cloth face masks for the public and not the surgical and N95 masks needed by health care providers.

The CDC recommends cloth face masks for the general public.

9. How do I clean my mask?

We recommend washing your cloth mask each day in hot and soapy water (a washing machine works great).

Using a "clean" and "dirty" Ziploc bag (note: be sure there isn't excess moisture in the bag) or paper lunch sacks to separate masks in your back pack or purse is another great idea to keep your mask from getting dirty inside bags, purses and pockets.

10. Did Kootenai Health mandate masks for the community?

Kootenai Health does not have the authority to mandate masks in public. The only organizations and people capable of mandating masks in public are: the federal government, the state government, the city government or the public health district.

Kootenai Health does require all people who enter our buildings (employees, patients, visitors) to wear a mask at all times.

The hospital has the obligation and legal right to implement rules and restrictions to keep patients and staff safe.

We support the decision to mandate masking to help keep our community safe.

Testing:

11. If you test the same person twice, and both tests are positive, are they counted as two cases?

No. The tracking numbers for the county represent the number of COVID-19 positive individuals, not for the number of positive test results.

12. Is the COVID-19 nasal swab test accurate?

Our medical professionals believe the nasal swab test that checks for the virus is accurate and the results can be trusted. It is much more likely to have a false negative (testing too early or insufficient sample) than a false positive.

If tested too early, or submitting an insufficient sample, a test could result negative. This same individual may test positive at a later date in time. It is extremely rare that a false positive result is seen.

Recently we have seen a number of home tests and antibody (serology) tests on the market. If a test sample is not collected by a trained professional and/or the test is not processed in a lab that follows appropriate clinical protocols, it's accuracy can be negatively impacted.

13. Can the numbers be trusted?

As with all infectious disease cases, Kootenai Health, other health care organizations, and laboratories provide the number of COVID-19 positive tests to Panhandle Health District each day. The Panhandle Health District reports this information in their dashboard online and sends the information to the State Department of Health and Welfare, who then passes it onto the CDC. This information is then used by the state and federal government.

14. I heard a papaya and a goat tested positive for COVID-19, is this true?

In May 2020, Tanzania's President, John Magufuli said he had sent samples taken from a goat, a sheep, a bird and a papaya, labeled them with human names and sent them to Tanzania's National Laboratory for testing. In a speech, he said the papaya and the goat tested positive. He claims this is proof that the labs were falsifying positive test results. [Here is an article on NPR about this topic.](#) He went on to say he had ordered an herbal cure for COVID-19 available in Madagascar. This claim has not been independently verified.

Hospital Capacity:

15. If the hospital is at capacity, why are some people furloughed?

No employees who provide direct patient care are currently furloughed.

At the start of the pandemic some employees who had little work to do (because non-urgent cases were postponed) took a furlough or were redeployed in other areas.

Currently, all non-patient care employees are taking one extra day off per pay period as part of our financial recovery plan.

16. How many Critical Care (intensive care) beds do you have?

Kootenai Health's traditional Critical Care unit has 26 beds. Six more hospital rooms have been converted to Critical Care rooms with the necessary equipment, air flow and supplies. We are working on staffing those additional beds with nurses and intensive care physicians.

17. Where are COVID-19 patients treated?

Kootenai Health converted one of our medical units to an all COVID-19 unit. This unit treats patients positive with COVID-19 who need regular hospital-level care and also those who need critical-level care.

18. Why can't all rooms be used for Critical Care?

Critical Care requires highly specialized equipment, supplies, and most importantly, specially-trained critical care staff to care for patients. We have converted an additional six rooms to be Critical Care rooms, but not all rooms can be converted.

19. Is Kootenai Health continuing non-urgent surgeries?

As of today, yes. Kootenai Health is working to care for our entire community. If we stop doing all non-urgent procedures many community members who need procedures will be left waiting. Delaying medical care can be a safety concern. Just because a surgery is not urgent, does not mean it doesn't need to be done in a timely manner.

We are still working on the backlog of procedures from the March/April shutdown.

We are trying to balance the needs of our COVID-19 patients with the needs of non-COVID-19 patients who need care.

20. Why aren't patients being discharged if they don't need to be in the hospital?

Every patient is required to have a safe plan of care before they can be discharged. Many skilled nursing and assisted living facilities will not accept their residents back from the hospital if they have COVID-19. If a family member or friend cannot care for these people in their home, and there is no place to which these patients can be discharged, Kootenai Health must keep them in the hospital.

COVID-19:

21. Isn't COVID-19 just like the flu?

No, so far COVID-19 is more contagious. The first COVID-19 American death was reported on February 29. As of July 27, 2020, five months later, more than 149,000 Americans have died from COVID-19.

According to the CDC the flu season accounts for around 12,000 – 61,000 American deaths each year since 2010.

22. How is a cause of death determined?

The cause of death is determined by the attending physician. When a person dies, his or her physician reviews their case and determines the cause of death before signing a death certificate.

This process is the standard practice for all physicians across the country.

Please note, there is no financial incentive for a physician when determining cause of death. [Please see this vital statistic reporting guide from the CDC](#)

23. Does Kootenai Health have enough ventilators?

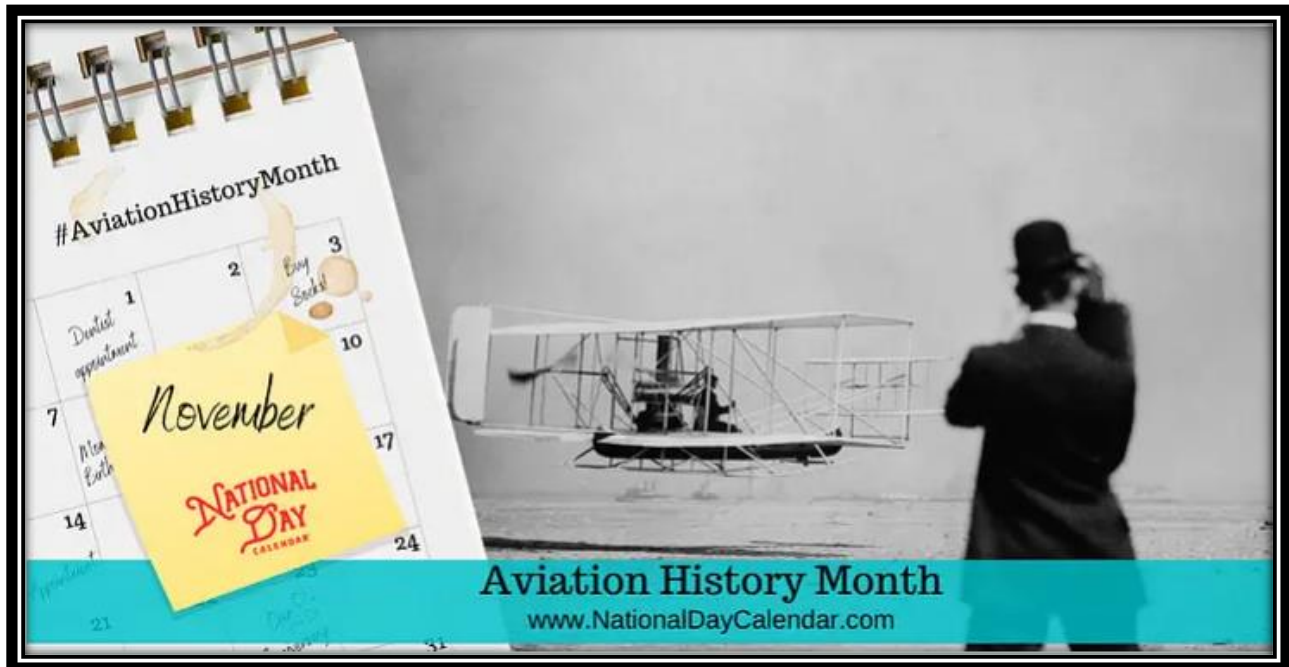
In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, ventilators were used extensively and there was quickly a shortage of ventilators. As more has been learned about the most effective course of treatment for COVID-19, other equipment, such as a BiPap machine, is being used more frequently. At this point, we are confident we have enough ventilators and ventilator-alternatives such as BiPap, to effectively care for our COVID-19 patients.

24. I have seen mask exemption cards you can print off the internet, can I use one?

Kootenai Health requires all employees, visitors and patients to wear a mask when in our facilities. Kootenai Health requires a formal, written doctor’s note to be exempt from this requirement and encourages wearing a mask unless incapacitated.



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Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 2020

Contact: Katherine Hoyer
208-415-5108

Differences Between Types of COVID-19 Tests

NORTH IDAHO – COVID-19 testing has come a long way since the beginning of the pandemic and with that may come some confusion on what test you should get, when to be tested, and how accurate are the tests. Below is a breakdown of the types of tests that are available.

Molecular: also know as Diagnostic test, viral test, molecular test, nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), RT-PCR test, LAMP test. Diagnoses active coronavirus infection.

Antigen: Rapid diagnostic test (Some molecular tests are also rapid tests.) Diagnoses active coronavirus infection. Antigen tests are more likely to miss an active coronavirus infection compared to molecular tests. Your health care provider may order a molecular test if your antigen test shows a negative result, but you have symptoms of COVID-19.

Antibody: Serological test, serology, blood test, serology test. This test shows if you've been infected by coronavirus in the past.

In Idaho, public health districts are receiving the BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Test kits produced by Abbott Diagnostics. Many pharmacies and private providers now offer antigen testing. An order from a provider is still needed just like with the PCR tests for the antigen tests. Antigen tests are intended for use in patients who are currently symptomatic. It is intended to detect a current COVID-19 infection and is highly effective at around 98% versus PCR testing which is 100%, when used correctly. BinaxNOW is a "same day" results test, meaning results will be available to practitioners in about 15 minutes.

Although antigen tests are faster and cheaper than laboratory PCR tests, they are not as sensitive. Idaho considers positives on antigen tests to be probable, not confirmed, COVID-19 cases. If an individual is experiencing symptoms and has a negative antigen test, it is recommended that they follow-up with a PCR test.

"One of the most important details about the antigen test is that an individual needs to be symptomatic to receive this type of test," said Karen Yao, epidemiologist at Panhandle Health District. "The PCR test can detect the virus when people are pre and post symptomatic, but the antigen test is not that sensitive so the timing of the test is very important."

According to the World Health Organization, the likelihood of a false negative with an antigen test is higher because the individual is more likely to have lower viral loads after having experienced symptoms for more than five to seven days.

"Testing within the first 4 days of an individual experiencing symptoms will provide the most accurate test result," said Yao. "An individual should opt for a PCR test if they missed that testing window for an antigen test."

The test itself is very similar to other COVID-19 testing done recently. It is a nasal swab that is then put into a cardboard sleeve. A few drops of chemical reagent are then added to the card and the swab is then rotated in the card to mix the reagent and virus on the swab. The virus on the nasal swab interacts with

the chemicals (reagent) on the card and after about 15 minutes your results should be known. Current PCR COVID-19 testing requires that the swab be taken and then sent out to a lab.

For testing in your area, check get-tested-covid19.org. This site is not a complete resource and the developers are adding more sites as they learn of them. PHD advises individuals to contact their primary care provider to inquire about testing. If someone does not have insurance and does not have a primary care provider, call PHD's COVID19 hotline to be assessed for a test at 877-415-5225.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.



How to Observe

Computer Security Day

Use the checklist below to secure your computer. It's important to review your computer's security on a regular basis. If you use social media, it's a good time to review your settings. Social media is another way identity thieves, viruses and computer fraud is committed. Spread the word on social media using #ComputerSecurityDay to inform others how they can secure their data!

- Enable Windows Update.
- Install and keep running antivirus software.
- Turn on Windows Firewall.
- Keep all software updated.
- Always use strong passwords.
- Don't share passwords and don't write them down.
- A password is required to access my computer.
- Remove unused programs.
- Secure your wireless network.
- Back up critical data.
- Use caution when browsing the Internet.
- I log off the computer when I'm not using it.
- My web browser does not store or remember my passwords.
- Periodically remove temporary Internet files.