

March 10, 2020

To: The Staff of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center

Since 1920, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has been in the Augusta community, caring for the region's Veterans. Today, there are about 2,500 employees at Charlie Norwood Medical Center who serve more than 46,000 Veterans each year.

We are proud that, through multiple infection crises, SARS, and daily infections, we have met these challenges to protect both our Veterans and our employees. We are approaching the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak in the same manner as our 100-year legacy.

As of today, Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center has not received any patients who have tested positive for the new coronavirus, COVID-19. Since this most recent global infection outbreak was reported, we have accrued an adequate supply chain to ensure quality care for our Veterans and protect our employees. We have determined adequate availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies should a Veteran present with an active COVID-19 case, as well as others that may follow.

Ninety-nine percent (99%) of Augusta VA staff have received PPE training and COVID-19 response protocol, with the remaining few on leave or in the process of completing the training. There are also 10 Safety Department Staff to ensure that our employees can don their personal protection equipment and remove it safely. We have further ensured that we have adequate number of beds with appropriate air flow to care for potential infected Veterans.

We have limited public entrances at our main campus to two entrances each at the Uptown and Downtown locations. Staff is screening at those entrances to ensure individuals get the care they need while not exposing patients, staff, and other guests.

Every new infection outbreak presents new challenges to any health care facility. Charlie Norwood Medical Center is working diligently to continue providing quality care for our nation's Veterans, as we adjust and adapt our operations as required through this contagion.

Protecting our Veteran patients and our staff is VA's highest priority. We are very proud of the professionalism of our employees and we look forward to continuing our service to the Veterans of this community with safety and the extraordinary quality that only the Veterans Health Administration can deliver.

Richard A. Stone, M.D.
Executive In Charge, Veterans Health Administration