

Governor Phil Murphy

# Murphy Administration Sends Mission Critical Team into Menlo Park Veterans Home to Help Improve Care of Residents

11/22/2022

**TRENTON** – To aid and advance ongoing efforts to address challenges currently facing the Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park, the Murphy Administration is sending a Mission Critical Team of experienced health care administrators and infection preventionists to the facility to offer guidance and support in making improvements. Two of the Mission Critical Team members have arrived on-site to begin assisting the home while the third member will arrive within the next week.

The goal of the Mission Critical Team will be to collaborate with the facility leaders and staff to improve quality of care through mentoring, coaching, and sharing of operational and clinical best practices.

With the full support of Governor Phil Murphy, the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) is sending these three experts into Menlo Park in response to New Jersey Adjutant General Lisa Hou's request that the Mission Critical Team guide the facility's ongoing efforts to improve resident care.

"While my Administration has taken important steps to improve the performance and strengthen the resiliency of our veterans memorial homes over the past few years, it is clear our work is not done," said **Governor Murphy**. "The Department of Health's inspection of the Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park has given us crucial insight into the challenges currently facing this facility. We must, and will, hold State-owned facilities to the same standards we hold privately-owned long-term care facilities. It is our solemn duty as a State to protect the health and well-being of the veterans in our care – the very veterans who once put their lives on the line to protect this nation. My Administration remains firmly committed to this objective."

The three-member team, which works within DOH's Office of Long-Term Care Resiliency, includes an administrator and a nurse consultant – who have already arrived at the facility – and an infection control preventionist, who will join the other team members at Menlo Park on November 28.

"The Department sent this team to collaborate with leaders and staff to improve and sustain the quality of care in the veterans home," said **Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "The team has already begun their assessment and collaboration with onsite staff to make needed improvements. The care and safety of our residents who call Menlo Park home remain our priority."

"The mission critical team provides additional expertise during this difficult time," said **Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., The Adjutant General of New Jersey and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**. "I requested the team as another tool in the toolbox to continually improve the quality of care for our residents, evaluate our staff processes, and renew our dedication to the Veterans in our care. The Department is working continuously to implement numerous changes and initiatives with all three Veterans Memorial Homes. My top priorities are to provide high-quality care to our residents, attract and retain qualified staff, and improve infection control in our facilities."

The Mission Critical Team will spend a minimum of one month at the Menlo Park facility, reviewing all processes and embedding best practices for long-term and ongoing improvements. During this period, DOH's Infection Control Assessment & Response (ICAR) team will also be onsite to support resident and healthcare personnel safety and quality improvement.

The important work of DOH's Mission Critical Team is supported by funding in Governor Murphy's Fiscal Year 2023 budget. This funding represents one component of the Murphy Administration's ongoing efforts to improve the operations of long-term care facilities throughout the state – both publicly and privately-owned.

Other steps the Governor has taken since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic include hiring a health consulting group to make recommendations on improving long-term care facilities and signing several bills into law based on those recommendations. A package (https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562020/approved/20200916b.shtml) of bills signed in 2020 implemented minimum wages for long-term care staff, created direct care ratio (https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562020/20201023a.shtml) requirements, and centralized long-term care communications to better prepare the State to respond to infectious disease outbreaks in these facilities.

Within the veterans memorial homes, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has continued to pursue modernization of health records systems to increase efficiency and accuracy, has implemented technological capabilities, and has worked with outside consultants in furtherance of these crucial goals.

## Governor Phil Murphy

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