



DVA COVID-19 Update: December 23, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no Veteran Patients with COVID-19, however as a result of community based COVID-19 positivity rates, the HCC continues additional COVID-19 testing of Veteran Patients with all Veterans and staff testing negative for COVID this week. All masking, distancing/barriers and heightened hygienic and cleaning procedures remain in place and increased COVID-19 testing will continue until further notice. We continue implementation of DPH's and the Governor's directives for employees regarding mandatory vaccinations and the limited allowed exceptions. Any HCC staff member granted a religious or medical COVID vaccine exemption is required to provide a negative COVID PCR test each week and are subject to additional COVID testing performed at the HCC and must wear elevated levels of PPE particularly when with Veteran Patients.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in eight months and unvaccinated Veteran Residents (currently one Veteran) and all Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program (VVTP) participants tested negative for COVID-19 this week. We continue monthly testing of unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all VVTP participants with the next test scheduled for mid-January. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section or the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit. Regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities continue for Veteran Residents including shopping, theater trips, bowling, and attending on campus and community based DVA, civic and Veteran Service Organization events.

Since the Pandemic began, the DVA has provided direct care to two hundred and sixty-five Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of whom seventy-six tested positive or retested positive for COVID-19 since March 2020. Of those testing positive, sixty-nine recovered from the virus. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19, and a Veteran Patient passed away in December 2020 and one in January 2021 from COVID-19 complications. One Veteran Patient with COVID-19 passed away in December 2020 from a non-COVID-19 medical occurrence.

Of the eighty-three DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, eighty have recovered and returned to work. Three staff members are recovering at home and will return to work consistent with DVA clinical protocols over the next week. The DVA vaccine initiative remains highly effective with eighty-nine percent of staff having received their first COVID vaccine dose, eighty percent receiving their second dose and thirty-four percent having received a booster vaccine (periodic drops in vaccination rates are due to new staff pending vaccinations). Our on-Campus Vaccine clinics continue to offer initial COVID-19 vaccines in addition to administering COVID-19 vaccine boosters to eligible Veteran Patients, Veteran Residents, and staff as well as Flu vaccines of which the majority of Veteran Patients and Residents have received.

The current DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols, previous COVID-19 weekly updates and other information is available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.