



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
287 West Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067



Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner

DVA COVID-19 Update: April 2, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit. Four Veteran Patients are in self-isolation for monitoring as they recently returned from acute care or other community-based healthcare facilities or were recently admitted to the HCC. These Veterans have tested negative for the virus but are in Self-Isolation out of an abundance of caution until clinically cleared for release. In the absence of any COVID-19 cases among Veterans or staff for more than two months, the HCC is not conducting weekly COVID-19 testing of all Veteran Patients, but instead testing individual Veterans and Veteran cohorts as clinically indicated.

The DVA Residential Facility has its first case of a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident this week after more than two and a half months with no new cases. The COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident is among the few Veteran Residents who declined receiving the vaccine. Consistent with DVA protocols, we conducted immediate contact tracing, tested all Veterans living in the same residential wing and who work with the COVID-19 Positive Veteran with all results negative for COVID-19. As such, we have determined that this Veteran contracted the virus in a community based setting and since the Veteran was off Campus when we learned he was COVID positive he was informed that upon return to Campus he would be placed in the Residential COVID Isolation and recovery Unit until clinically cleared for release. The Veteran Resident has not returned to the DVA Campus and is instead staying with a friend. As such, there are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation and Recovery Unit or in the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit. The DVA is testing Residential Veterans once per month with additional testing of Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants. To date the DVA has tested two hundred and forty-four Veteran Residents and Patients (most multiple times) for COVID-19 with sixty-nine testing positive or retesting positive since March 2020. Of those testing positive, sixty-three recovered from the virus. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring due to COVID-19, and two Veteran Patients passed away in December and January from COVID-19 complications. One Veteran Patient with COVID-19 passed away in December from a non-COVID-19 related medical occurrence.

Of the fifty-seven DVA staff members testing positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, fifty-six staff members have recovered and returned to work and one remains in recovery and will be cleared to return to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. The DVA continues weekly COVID-19 testing of direct care and front-line staff, all of whom tested negative for the virus for a seventh consecutive week. This testing will continue until further notice. The DVA has vaccinated ninety-two percent of our Veteran Residents and Patients and approximately fifty-three percent of our DVA Healthcare and other direct care providers and front-line staff are vaccinated.

The DVA staff, with the support of our Federal VA partners and other state agencies, continue the hard work of meeting and overcoming the challenges of this pandemic to keep Veterans and staff safe. The DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols, previous COVID-19 weekly updates and other important information is available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.