



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
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Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner

DVA COVID-19 Update: December 30, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has one Veteran Patient with COVID-19 who is recovering at the West Haven VA. There are three Veteran Patients in protective isolation as recent admissions or due to recently returning from a community-based healthcare provider. Due to increased COVID-19 cases among DVA staff we have expanded COVID-19 testing and added additional infectious disease control procedures as part of the testing process. All masking, distancing/barriers and heightened hygienic and cleaning procedures remain in place and increased COVID-19 testing will continue until further notice. The DVA is following DPH's and the Governor's directives for mandatory vaccinations with any HCC staff member granted a religious or medical COVID vaccine exemption required to provide a negative COVID PCR test each week, submit to additional testing at the HCC, and required to 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 January 11th. There is one Veteran Resident in protective isolation. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation Unit, however there is one Veteran Resident in the protective monitoring section with the results of a COVID-19 PCR test pending after presenting to the Residential Facility Clinic with minor COVID like symptoms. 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 seventy 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 and one remains at the West Haven VA. 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 ninety-two DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, eighty-one have recovered and returned to work. Eleven staff members, most of whom tested positive over the past week, are recovering at home and will return to work consistent with DVA clinical protocols. The DVA vaccine rate for staff is eighty-nine percent having received a first COVID vaccine dose and just over eighty percent being fully vaccinated with over thirty percent having received a booster vaccine (fluctuations in vaccination rates are due to new staff pending vaccinations). On-Campus Vaccine clinics offer initial COVID-19 vaccines in addition to administering boosters to eligible Veteran Patients, Veteran Residents, and Flu vaccines with ninety-three percent of Veteran Patients vaccinated for the Flu.

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>.

I wish you a Happy and safe New Year!