



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
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Thomas J. Saadi
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DVA COVID-19 Update: January 15, 2022

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has three COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients who are recovering in community based healthcare settings and there are no Veteran Patients in protective isolation for COVID-19 monitoring purposes as a recent admission or recently returning from a community-based healthcare provider. As the DVA continues to experience COVID-19 cases among DVA staff, we maintain expanded regular COVID-19 testing and additional infectious disease control procedures to minimize the risk of COVID to Veteran Patients and staff. 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 the Governor's directives for mandatory COVID vaccine boosters for HCC staff with a compliance date of February 11, 2022. Any HCC staff member granted a religious or medical COVID vaccine exemption is required to provide a negative COVID PCR test each week, submit to additional testing at the HCC, and to wear elevated levels of PPE particularly when with Veteran Patients.

The DVA Residential Facility continues to experience new COVID-19 positive cases among Veteran Residents with sixteen Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation Unit and two COVID positive Veteran Residents being treated in a community-based healthcare setting. Five Veteran Residents were recently clinically cleared and released from the COVID Positive Isolation Unit. There are six Veteran Residents in self-isolation in their rooms due to contact tracing awaiting results of a second COVID test after an initial negative test. Veterans are placed in self-isolation in their rooms if they are identified through contact tracing or have COVID like symptoms but have a negative rapid COVID test result. The DVA reinstated increased testing for all Veteran Residents after many months of only testing unvaccinated Veteran Residents and Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants. Testing of all Veteran Residents took place on January 11th with several COVID positive asymptomatic Veteran Residents identified who were immediately placed in the COVID isolation Unit. There will be full COVID testing again on January 25th and February 15th. Regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities have been curtailed except for necessary shopping trips, and small group activities that present a low risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Since the Pandemic began, the DVA has provided direct care for two hundred and seventy Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of which ninety-seven tested or retested positive for COVID-19. Of those testing positive, seventy recovered from the virus, sixteen remain in recovery at the DVA and five are in a community-based hospital or a clinical rehab setting. One Veteran Resident and three Veteran Patients passed away in 2020 due to COVID-19, and one Veteran Patient passed away 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 one-hundred and nineteen DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, one-hundred and one have recovered and returned to work. Eighteen staff members, most of whom tested positive over the past week to ten days, 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 receiving a booster vaccine (fluctuations in vaccination rates are due to new staff pending vaccinations). On-Campus Vaccine clinics continue to provide COVID-19 and Flu vaccines to staff, Veteran Patients, Veteran Residents, 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>.