



## **DVA COVID-19 Update: January 21, 2022**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has seven COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients who are recovering in community based healthcare settings and are expected to be clinically cleared to return to the HCC in the next week. There are four COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC COVID isolation Unit and one Veteran Patient in protective isolation for COVID-19 monitoring purposes after recently returning from a community-based healthcare provider. While the DVA is experiencing a significant drop in new COVID-19 cases among DVA staff, we maintain regular COVID-19 testing and broad 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. Also, pursuant to the Governor's recent Executive Order (14F) no visitors are permitted entry to the HCC unless they are either: (1) fully vaccinated, (2) show proof of a negative COVID test within the previous 48 hours, or (3) submit to rapid COVID testing at the HCC.

The DVA Residential Facility has experienced a rapid decline in new COVID-19 positive cases among Veteran Residents with one Veteran Resident in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation Unit and one COVID positive Veteran Resident being treated in a community-based healthcare setting. This is a decline from a high of 18 COVID-19 positive Veteran Residents approximately 10 days ago. Four Veteran Residents were recently clinically cleared and released from the COVID Positive Isolation Unit. There is one Veteran Resident in self-isolation in the Veteran's room 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 continues biweekly testing for all Veteran Residents with the next such testing scheduled for Tuesday January 25<sup>th</sup> followed by full COVID testing again on February 15<sup>th</sup>. With the significant drop in COVID cases among Veteran Residents and DVA Staff, regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities are being reinstated including shopping trips, movies, community-based events and group activities that present a low risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Since the Pandemic began, the DVA has provided direct care for 270 Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of which 102 tested or retested positive for COVID-19. Of those testing positive, 89 recovered from the virus, five are recovering at the DVA and eight are in a community-based hospitals 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 123 DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, 119 have recovered and returned to work. Four staff members, who 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 eighty percent being fully vaccinated with thirty-six percent receiving a booster vaccine (fluctuations in vaccination rates are due to new staff pending vaccinations). On-Campus Vaccine clinics continue providing COVID-19 and Flu vaccines to staff, Veteran Patients and Residents, with 93% 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>.