



## **DVA COVID-19 Update: November 15, 2021**

We are pleased to report that the DVA Healthcare Center (HCC) recently received a top 5 out of 5 rating by U.S. News & World Report in its review of Nursing Homes nationwide (<https://health.usnews.com/best-nursing-homes/area/ct/john-l-levitow-health-care-center-075443>).

The HCC has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients. All masking, distancing/barriers and heightened hygienic and cleaning procedures remain in place at the HCC to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We continue implementation for new employees of DPH's and the Governor's directives regarding mandatory vaccinations and 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 a weekly rapid COVID test performed during work hours at the HCC and they must wear elevated levels of PPE particularly when interacting with Veteran Patients.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in seven months and unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program (VVTP) participants tested negative for COVID-19 last month. We continue monthly testing of unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all VVTP participants with testing conducted this morning the results of which will be reported in the next DVA update. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive or the protective monitoring sections of the Isolation Unit. Regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities continue for Veteran Residents including shopping, baseball games, fishing trips, theater trips, bowling, hiking and attending community based civic and Veteran Service Organization events.

Since the Pandemic began, the DVA has provided direct care to two hundred and sixty-one Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of whom seventy-five 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 related medical occurrence.

Of the seventy-seven DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, seventy-six have recovered and returned to work. One staff member is recovering at home and will return to work consistent with DVA clinical protocols. The DVA vaccine initiative remains highly effective with nearly ninety percent of staff having received their first COVID vaccine dose and eighty percent being fully vaccinated (periodic drops in vaccination rates due to new staff pending vaccination). Our on Campus Vaccine clinics continue to offer initial vaccines in addition to administering COVID-19 vaccine boosters to eligible Veteran Patients, Veteran Residents, and staff as well as Flu vaccines.

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>.