



COVID-19 Agency Update
August 21, 2020

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in its Isolation and Recovery Unit and there have been no new Veteran Patients testing positive for COVID-19 in more than three months. The DVA was notified on Saturday that our weekly testing of all DVA direct care and front line staff identified one asymptomatic HCC staff with the virus. That person was immediately placed on administrative leave and any Veteran Patients identified through contact tracing were moved to the Isolation Unit as a precaution. Earlier this week all Veteran Patients, including those in the Isolation Unit, tested negative for COVID-19. As part of the DVA's rigorous COVID-19 mitigation procedures, we will conduct COVID-19 testing of all Veteran Patients each Monday for the next two weeks. There are twelve Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit, all of whom have tested negative for the virus this week, however as they are new admissions, patients who recently returned from an acute care facility or who were identified through contact tracing, will remain in the Isolation Unit until cleared by clinical staff for release after additional COVID-19 tests and monitoring.

The DVA Residential Facility has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Residents in its Isolation Recovery Unit and no new Veteran Residents have tested positive for COVID-19 in nearly three months. The DVA Residential Facility completed a full one day testing of all Residential Veterans on July 21st with all Veterans testing negative for COVID-19 and all Veteran Residents will be tested again on September 9th as part of our COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Every Thursday since July 9th, the DVA conducted COVID-19 testing of all direct care and front-line staff with one staff member testing positive last week as explained above. The testing results to date and the DVA's response to any positive tests demonstrate that our COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including wearing masks, screening and ongoing testing are keeping our Veterans and staff safe. Testing of DVA staff will continue weekly until further notice to mitigate the potential spread of the virus.

To date the DVA has tested two hundred and thirty-three Veteran Residents and Patients (most tested multiple times) for COVID-19 with twenty-five testing positive, most of these early in the pandemic. Of the twenty-five Veteran Residents and Patients who tested positive, twenty-two recovered from the virus. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in late April and early May due to COVID-19 complications. Six staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, with five recovering and returning to work and one who remains on administrative leave consistent with CDC and DPH return to work guidelines.

We continue adherence to the DVA COVID-19 Protocols and modifications thereto which are available, along with other important information, at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.