



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
287 West Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067



Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner

DVA COVID-19 Update: December 23, 2020

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) had five new cases of COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients this week and there are seven COVID positive Veteran Patients in the Isolation and Recovery Unit, nine Veteran Patients are temporarily at state COVID-19 Receiving Nursing Facilities (CRF) due to the HCC COVID positive Isolation Unit reaching capacity. One Veteran Patient returned today to the HCC from a CRF after recovering from COVID. There are no Veteran Patients in the non-COVID protective monitoring section of the HCC Isolation Unit with the last Veteran released to his room today. Veterans in non-COVID Isolation Unit were either new admissions, patients who recently returned from acute care or contact tracers who tested negative for the virus, and remain in the Isolation Unit until clinically cleared for release to their rooms. One Veteran Patient passed away this week while at a CRF from what is believed, at this time, to be non-COVID related complications due to preexisting underlying clinical conditions. The HCC continues weekly COVID-19 testing of all Veteran Patients.

The DVA Residential Facility had two Veteran Residents test COVID-19 positive this week, and there are four Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation Unit and two Veteran Residents in the Non-COVID section of the Isolation Unit for protective monitoring. Two Veteran Residents were recently released from the COVID positive zone after recovering and being cleared by clinical staff. Three Veteran Residents were recently released from the non-COVID Isolation zone after showing no signs or symptoms, testing negative twice and being cleared by clinical staff. Veterans in non-COVID Isolation/Quarantine are either new admissions, patients who recently returned from acute care or contact tracers who have tested negative for the virus and remain in the Isolation Unit until cleared by clinical staff for release to their regular rooms. The DVA continues regular testing of all Residential Veterans which in December we increased from once to twice per month with additional testing of Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants. To date the DVA has tested two hundred and thirty-nine Veteran Residents and Patients (most multiple times) for COVID-19 with sixty-four testing positive or retesting positive since March 2020, half of which were in the past month. Of those testing positive, thirty-six recovered from the virus, eleven are currently in the Residential and HCC COVID-19 Isolation Units, nine Veterans are at designated COVID-19 Receiving Nursing Facilities and one is in acute care. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring and one Veteran Patient passed away last week from COVID-19 complications and one Veteran Patient with COVID passed away from a non-COVID medical occurrence.

The DVA continues weekly COVID testing of direct care and front-line staff, which will continue until further notice. A total of forty-two staff members tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, nineteen of whom tested positive in the past two weeks. Twenty-three DVA staff members have recovered and returned to work and twenty-two are in various stages of home isolation or clinical care until cleared to return to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. DVA continues efforts in accordance with emergency plans to address the temporary loss of a number of HCC staff with support of the Federal VA, CT National Guard and Medical Reserve Corps as we await the return of isolating staff and work to fill full and part-time staff vacancies. As directed by Commissioner Saad, the HCC Isolation Unit COVID positive capacity is being expanded to minimize the transfer of Veterans to CRFs and return those at a CRF to the DVA.

Today the DVA took a big step forward in battling COVID-19 with many of our DVA Healthcare and other direct care providers and Veteran Patients receiving their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination. We also continue working plans to vaccinate all remaining DVA Staff and Veteran Residents in the near future. The DVA COVID-19 Protocols with most recent changes, DVA COVID-19 weekly updates and other important information is available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.