



**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: November 20, 2020**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has five Veteran Patients in our Isolation and Recovery Unit all of whom have tested negative for the virus, however as they are new admissions or patients who recently returned from acute care, they will remain in the Isolation Unit until cleared by clinical staff for release after additional COVID-19 tests and monitoring. Veteran Patients are transferred from the Isolation Unit to their rooms after completing protective monitoring including multiple negative COVID-19 tests. Among these five Veterans is an individual who initially tested COVID-19 positive who has since tested negative for the virus and was negative for COVID anti-bodies on multiple occasions indicating that the initial positive test was a “false positive.” The DVA HCC has not had a COVID positive patient since May 5, 2020.

The DVA Residential Facility has one COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in its Isolation Recovery Unit, this is the first COVID positive Veteran Resident since early June that has tested positive for COVID-19 in several months. Several other Veteran Residents who have tested negative for the virus, who had recently returned from an acute care facility or were identified for isolation through expanded contact tracing, were recently released from the Isolation Unit after multiple negative COVID tests and being cleared by clinical staff for release. The DVA Residential Facility completed five rounds of COVID-19 testing of all Residential Veterans in July, September, October and earlier this week with all Veteran Residents, except for the previously cited case, testing negative for COVID-19. Two rounds of testing of all Veteran Residents is scheduled for December and will continue monthly until further notice. The HCC is also conducting weekly testing of all Veteran Patients. This “Point Prevalence Testing” of all Veterans is a key element in our rigorous efforts to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

To date the DVA has tested two hundred and thirty-seven Veteran Residents and Patients (most tested multiple times) for COVID-19 with twenty-six testing positive, nearly all early in the pandemic. Of those testing positive, twenty-two recovered from the virus and one is currently in the Residential Isolation Unit. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring from COVID-19 complications.

In addition to ongoing testing of all Veterans, the DVA has conducted COVID-19 testing of all direct care and front-line staff weekly since early July and will continue weekly testing until at least the end of the year. A total of twenty-one staff members tested positive for COVID-19 over the past nine months, with thirteen having recovered and returned to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. Eight DVA staff members identified as COVID positive over the past few weeks are in home quarantine and will return to work once cleared consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines (five are expected to return to work next week). We followed CDC and DPH protocols in response to all positive cases including conducting contact tracing and Veteran Point Prevalence Testing. The DVA’s comprehensive response to this pandemic and adherence to our COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including regular testing, rapid isolation, contact tracing, wearing masks, and daily screening are working to keep our Veterans and staff safe.

DVA COVID-19 Protocols and modifications, along with all prior agency COVID-19 updates and other important information are available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>. Please have a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving!