



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 6, 2020

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has one Veteran Patient in its Isolation and Recovery Unit who initially tested COVID-19 positive on Monday of this week. This is the first COVID positive patient since May 5th and who actually tested negative for the virus twice since the initial positive test result. As such, the DVA is conducting a COVID-19 anti-body test to confirm whether the patient had COVID-19 or was the first result was a false positive. There are five Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit protective monitoring section who all 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.

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 several months. There is one Veteran Resident in the HCC Isolation Unit who has tested negative for the virus, however as he recently returned from an acute care facility, he will remain in the Isolation Unit until cleared by clinical staff for release. The DVA Residential Facility completed four rounds of COVID-19 testing of all Residential Veterans in July, September and October with all Veteran Residents testing negative for COVID-19. Testing of all Veteran Residents is next scheduled for November 17th and is to continue monthly until further notice. The HCC is 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 the twenty-six Veterans who tested positive, twenty-two recovered from the virus and one is currently in the HCC Isolation Unit. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in late April and early May due to 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 fifteen staff members tested positive for COVID-19 over the past eight months, with eleven having recovered and returned to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. Four 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. We followed CDC and DPH protocols in response to these positive cases including conducting contact tracing and patient Point Prevalence Testing with all Veteran Patients testing negative for the virus every week since October 5th except for the single Veteran Patient previously discussed. The DVA's comprehensive administrative and clinical 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>.