



DVA COVID-19 Update: October 16, 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 several months. There are four Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit, all of whom have tested negative for the virus, however as they are new admissions or patients who recently returned from an acute care facility, they will remain in the Isolation Unit until cleared by clinical staff for release after additional COVID-19 tests and monitoring. Other Veteran Patients have transferred from the Isolation Unit to their rooms after completing protective monitoring and testing negative for COVID-19.

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. The DVA Residential Facility completed two rounds of COVID-19 testing of all Residential Veterans in July and September with all Veterans testing negative for COVID-19. The next one-day testing of all Veteran Residents is scheduled for October 20th. Additional testing of all Veteran Residents is to be conducted in November and December. This approach, known as "Point Prevalence Testing" is one of the many protocols the DVA utilizes in our rigorous efforts to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

To date the DVA has tested two hundred and thirty-four Veteran Residents and Patients (most tested multiple times) for COVID-19 with twenty-five testing positive, nearly all being early in the pandemic. Of the twenty-five Veterans 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.

In addition to ongoing testing of Veterans, the DVA has conducted COVID-19 testing of all direct care and front-line staff every Thursday since July 9th and will continue such weekly testing until at least the end of the year. A total of eight staff members tested positive for COVID-19 over the past eight months, most occurring early in the pandemic with those staff members recovering and returning to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. The DVA identified one HCC staff member approximately two weeks ago as COVID-19 positive, this staff member was and remains asymptomatic, had minimal contact with Veteran Patients and wore proper PPE at all times. We followed CDC and DPH protocols in response including conducting contact tracing and initiated Point Prevalence Testing with all Veteran Patients testing negative for the virus on October 5th and October 12th. A third Point Prevalence Test will be conducted on October 19th. DVA also had a staff member, who has been out of the office on vacation since October 2nd, report testing positive on October 14th after exposure to a COVID-19 positive person on October 12th. Based on the date of exposure and the length of time out of the office there is no possibility of transmission by this staffer to others at the DVA Campus. The DVA Veteran and staff testing results to date and comprehensive clinical response demonstrates that our COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including rapid isolation and contact tracing for any positive tests, wearing masks, screening and ongoing testing are keeping 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>.