



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
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Thomas J. Saadi
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DVA COVID-19 Update: October 30, 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 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 three rounds of COVID-19 testing of all Residential Veterans in July, September and last week 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-five testing positive, nearly all 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 all Veterans, the DVA has conducted COVID-19 testing of all direct care and front-line staff every week since early July and will continue such weekly testing until at least the end of the year. A total of twelve staff members tested positive for COVID-19 over the past eight months, with eight having recovered and returned to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. Four DVA staff members identified as COVID positive over the past several weeks will return to work once they have been cleared consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. Each of these twelve staff members had minimal contact with Veteran Patients or Residents and wore proper PPE at all times. 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 including last week. The DVA Veteran and staff testing results to date, and comprehensive clinical response, demonstrates that our COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including regular testing, rapid isolation, contact tracing, wearing masks, and screening 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>.