



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
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Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner

DVA COVID-19 Update: Oct. 15, 2021

The DVA Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients, and the two Veteran Patients who tested positive for COVID approximately six weeks ago (the only COVID-19 cases in the HCC in more than six months) have fully recovered. Pursuant to DPH directives, the HCC was required to implement a temporary suspension of indoor visitation due to an asymptomatic staff member testing positive for COVID-19 three weeks ago. We are pleased to announce that indoor visitation was reinstated this week after weekly COVID testing of all Veteran Patients and HCC Staff with all testing negative for the virus the past two weeks. All masking, distancing/barriers and heightened hygienic and cleaning procedures remain in place at the HCC to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and we have successfully implemented DPH's and the Governor's directives regarding mandatory vaccinations (with limited allowed exceptions) of HCC staff. Any HCC staff member who is granted a religious or medical COVID vaccine exemption must provide a negative COVID PCR test each week, is subject to a weekly rapid COVID test performed during work hours at the HCC and must wear elevated levels of PPE particularly when interacting with Veteran Patients.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in more than six months and unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program (VVTP) participants tested negative for COVID-19 three weeks ago. We continue monthly testing of unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all VVTP participants with the next test scheduled for Monday October 19th. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section or the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit. We continue regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities for Veteran Residents including shopping, baseball games, fishing trips, theater trips, bowling, hiking and attending community based civic and Veteran Service Organization events.

Since the Pandemic began, the DVA has provided direct care to two hundred and fifty-seven Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of whom seventy-five tested positive or retested positive for COVID-19 since March 2020. Of those testing positive, sixty-nine recovered from the virus. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19, and a Veteran Patient passed away in December 2020 and one in January 2021 from COVID-19 complications. One Veteran Patient with COVID-19 passed away in December 2020 from a non-COVID-19 related medical occurrence.

Of the seventy-six DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, all have recovered and returned to work. The DVA vaccine initiative has been highly effective with nearly eighty-eight percent of staff having received their first COVID vaccine dose and seventy-eight percent being fully vaccinated. Our on Campus Vaccine clinics continue to offer initial vaccines in addition to administering COVID-19 vaccine boosters to eligible Veteran Patients, Veteran Residents, and staff.

The current DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols, previous COVID-19 weekly updates and other information is available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.