



COVID-19 Agency Update
May 15, 2020

As you know, Governor Lamont has authorized some businesses in Connecticut to open **under very specific guidelines on May 20, 2020**. It is extremely important to remember that this is a limited and phased in transition and that all other COVID-19 mitigation orders and protocols remain in place including limits on the size of gatherings, mandatory wearing of facemasks and social distancing. At the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) all COVID-19 Protocols will remain in place until amended by Commissioner Thomas Saadi, who is currently reviewing some adjustments with DVA senior leadership and Public Health experts. To the extent that travel and other restrictions are to be adjusted, there are no plans to scale back the ongoing screening and testing of DVA Veterans and staff. In fact, the intent is to increase testing of Veterans and staff consistent with best practices for healthcare and congregant living facilities. Also, maximization of telework, to the extent that core DVA functions are able to continuously operate, will be extended beyond May 20th consistent with the Governor's directives.

The DVA Healthcare Center (HCC) currently has three COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit, two of whom are symptomatic for the virus but improving and one who is asymptomatic. Each of these Veterans Patients have serious underlying pre-existing medical conditions. No Veteran Patients tested positive for COVID-19 in the past eleven days.

The DVA Residential Facility tested 16 Veterans in the past twenty-four hours with one Veteran Resident testing positive for the virus. There are currently four Veteran Residents in the Residential Facility Isolation Unit, three of whom are now asymptomatic and will be released from Isolation if they test negative for the virus next week. One Veteran Resident is being treated in a critical care unit at a community based hospital for COVID-19 related complications. Three Veteran Residents, who recovered from COVID-19, remain in physical therapy/rehabilitation programs with one expected to return to the Residential program soon.

To date, the DVA has tested one-hundred and sixty-three Veteran Residents and Patients (many tested multiple times) for COVID-19 with twenty-four testing positive of which, thirteen have recovered and seven Veterans who tested COVID-19 positive are currently in the HCC and Residential Isolation Units on our Campus. One Veteran remains in a community based hospital, one Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients have passed away from COVID-19 and had serious underlying medical conditions. To date, four DVA staff members have tested positive for COVID-19, two of whom have recovered and are expected to return to work soon consistent with CDC guidelines.

The DVA continues daily screening of all staff and Veterans and adherence to the DVA Enhanced Safety and Health COVID-19 Protocols which are available, along with other important information, at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.