



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

**DVA COVID-19 Update: April 22, 2021**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit. Six Veteran Patients are in self-isolation for monitoring as they recently returned from acute care or other community-based healthcare facilities or were recently admitted to the HCC. These Veterans have tested negative for the virus but are in Self-Isolation out of an abundance of caution until clinically cleared for release. The HCC continues with weekly COVID-19 testing of all staff and Veteran Patients with all staff testing negative for the virus this week and with test results for Veteran Patients pending.

The DVA Residential Facility had its only COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident during the previous three months approximately one month ago. There have been no further COVID-19 positive Veteran Residents since then and the single COVID-19 Veteran was off Campus when learning of the positive COVID-19 test and has remained off Campus staying with a friend. We conducted a full point prevalence testing three weeks ago with all Veteran Residents testing negative for COVID-19 and this week all participants in the Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program tested negative for the virus. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation and Recovery Unit or in the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit. The DVA will continue testing Residential Veterans once per month with additional testing of Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants as an extra precaution until further notice. To date the DVA has tested two hundred and forty-five Veteran Residents and Patients (most multiple times) for COVID-19 with seventy testing positive or retesting positive since March 2020. Of those testing positive, sixty-four recovered from the virus. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring due to COVID-19, and two Veteran Patients passed away in December and January from COVID-19 complications. One Veteran Patient with COVID-19 passed away in December from a non-COVID-19 medical occurrence.

Of the sixty-one DVA staff members testing positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, fifty-nine staff members have recovered and returned to work and two remain in various stages of recovery and will be cleared to return to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines. The DVA will continue weekly COVID-19 testing of direct care and front-line staff until further notice. The DVA has vaccinated ninety-six percent of our Veteran Residents and Patients and approximately fifty-seven percent of our DVA Healthcare and other direct care providers and front-line staff are vaccinated.

As part of the move towards greater normalized operations, we held a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 21st with Governor Ned Lamont marking the completion of two major safety and quality of life improvement projects to our historic Rocky Hill Campus. The first project involved Fire Alarm and Sprinkler System upgrades replacing outdated systems with state-of-the-art fiber optic detection and communication systems and new sprinkler systems improving safety for Veterans, staff and visitors. The second project was ADA improvements throughout the Residential Facility including new powered doors, new and upgraded ramps and lifts, improvements to elevators, railings, lighting and signage making the facility more accessible, safer and improving the quality of life for our Veterans. After the ceremony, Governor Lamont toured the Residential Facility to see the ongoing quality of life improvements and newly renovated semiprivate rooms for Veterans.

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