



DVA COVID-19 Update: August 27, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit and no Veteran Patients have tested positive for COVID-19 in nearly five months. There is one Veteran Patient in self-isolation after returning to the HCC from off campus inpatient care and should be clinically cleared for release within a the next few days. The HCC continues visitation opportunities for family and friends of our Veteran Patients and we welcome individual and group volunteers in support of Veteran recreation and recognition events. We are closely monitoring increased COVID-19 transmission rates in the community and are in the process of adjusting COVID-19 mitigation protocols including increased testing of staff and Veterans as well as implementing DPH's and the Governor's directives regarding vaccination of State employees.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in nearly five months and unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants tested negative for COVID-19 ten days ago. The DVA continues monthly testing of unvaccinated Veteran Residents, unless they are a Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participant, all of whom are tested notwithstanding vaccine status. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section or the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit. The DVA continues regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities for Veteran Residents including shopping, baseball games, fishing trips, theater trips, bowling, hiking and attendance at community based Civic and Veteran Service Organization events.

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

Of the sixty-seven DVA staff members contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, sixty-five have recovered and returned to work. Two DVA HCC staff members are currently in home isolation due to testing COVID positive after an off Campus exposure. Based on contact tracing and the following of DVA COVID-19 mitigation protocols, there is very low risk of any exposure to Veterans on campus. As a precaution, on August 23rd we conducted rapid antigen COVID testing of all Veteran Patients with all testing negative for the virus. We will conduct PCR COVID-19 testing of all Veteran patients on August 30th.

All Veteran Patients are vaccinated and all but one Veteran Resident and nearly seventy percent of our DVA staff are vaccinated. While we were conducting monthly testing of unvaccinated staff members, we are transitioning to weekly testing of all HCC staff and Veteran Patients due to the COVID positive staff members.

As stated, we are monitoring COVID-19 and variant infection, hospitalization and death rates and are implementing additional COVID-19 mitigation measures as appropriate. 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>.