



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

DVA COVID-19 Update: July 2, 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 over three months. There is one Veteran Patient in self-isolation after returning to the HCC from off campus inpatient care and should soon be clinically cleared for release. The HCC continues to expand visitation opportunities by family and friends as well as Veteran recreation and recognition events however, we are taking a careful incremental approach to ensure the safety of our Veterans and our Staff. This week the DVA hosted a Quilts of Valor event during which more than twelve Veteran Patients, accompanied by family and friends, were presented with personalized patriotic themed quilts by the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in nearly four months and all unvaccinated Veteran Residents and Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants tested negative for COVID-19 two weeks ago. Based on the testing results and vaccination rates, the DVA is now testing only unvaccinated Veteran Residents, unless they are a Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participant, all of whom will continue to be tested monthly. There are no Veteran Residents in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation and Recovery Unit nor in the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit.

Since the beginning of the Pandemic, the DVA has provided direct care for two hundred and fifty 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-four DVA staff members contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, all have recovered and have returned to work after clinical clearance. The DVA has vaccinated ninety-nine percent of our Veteran Residents and Patients and just over sixty-seven percent of DVA staff. Based on our testing results, vaccination rates and the maintaining of certain COVID-19 mitigation procedures, we have transitioned to monthly testing of all unvaccinated staff members the third week of each month. Also, the DVA issued updated COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols on June 21, 2021, lifting some existing pandemic-based restrictions/requirements at our Campus. However, the wearing of face masks remains mandatory in all common areas in DVA buildings (see COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols for details). Failure of any person to follow DVA COVID-19 Mitigation rules when visiting a Veteran Patient or Veteran Resident will result in termination of the visit. The 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>.

Have a happy and safe 4th of July and please take time to remember the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces who have served and sacrificed for nearly 246 years to achieve our independence and preserve the freedoms we enjoy.