



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
287 West Street  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067



*Thomas J. Saadi*  
*Commissioner*

**DVA COVID-19 Update: May 20, 2021**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit. One Veteran Patient is in self-isolation for monitoring as this Veteran was recently admitted to the HCC. This Veteran has tested negative for the virus but is 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 one HCC staff member testing positive for COVID-19 this week. This staff member always wore the appropriate PPE and after conducting contact tracing, no Veterans or other staff members were identified as having “close contact” without proper PPE with the positive staff member.

The DVA Residential Facility had its only COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident during the previous three and a half months approximately two months ago. There have been no further COVID-19 positive Veteran Residents since then. We conducted full point prevalence testing two weeks ago with all Veteran Residents testing negative for COVID-19. The next full point prevalence testing for Veteran Residents is early June. 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. 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. To date the DVA has tested two hundred and forty-eight Veteran Residents and Patients (most multiple times) for COVID-19 with seventy-one testing positive or retesting positive 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 one 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 at a community based healthcare facility.

Of the sixty-four DVA staff members testing positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, sixty have recovered and returned to work, one continues to progress in long-term recovery and three others diagnosed over the past two weeks are in home quarantine and will return to work when clinically cleared. The DVA conducted full point prevalence testing of HCC staff this week with one staff member testing positive for the virus, as such, we will continue weekly testing of direct care and front-line staff and Veteran Patients until further notice. The DVA has vaccinated ninety-nine percent of our Veteran Residents and Patients and has surpassed sixty-two percent of DVA Healthcare and other direct care staff and front-line staff being vaccinated with a goal of 70-80% of staff being vaccinated within the next month.

In addition to the pandemic response, the DVA continues all regular operations including the recent completion of another Residential wing improvement project which converted four bed open bay style rooms to updated semiprivate rooms with more living space, new furniture including a sofa, recliners, tables and chairs in each room along with new bedding and welcome-back personal needs gift baskets for Residents.

New CDC guidelines notwithstanding, all DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols remain in place including masking requirements in all buildings for all persons (vaccinated or unvaccinated) until further notice pursuant to nursing home, congregant living and healthcare facility state and federal regulations. There will be adjustments to the DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols in the next several weeks. The DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols, previous COVID-19 weekly updates and other important information is available anytime at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.