



STORM ISAIAS & COVID-19 Agency Update **August 7, 2020**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on Monday to prepare for storm Isaias. As a result of the storm, many trees were uprooted and power lines downed causing loss of public utility power to the Campus and several buildings sustained roof and other damage. Upon loss of utility power, DVA's emergency generators powered the Campus, however the Healthcare Center (HCC) generator was not designed, when installed twelve years ago, to fully power the HCC including its AC Chiller. With no estimate of time to restore utility power, the Governor's Office and State EOC assisted in coordinating with Eversource for a supplemental generator for the HCC. The Campus is fully operational on generator power including the HCC AC Chiller. The DVA is addressing urgent repairs, conducting damage assessment and developing plans for long-term repairs and the strengthening of infrastructure. We do not have a time estimate for utility power restoration to the Campus.

The HCC has no Veteran Patients in its Isolation Recovery Unit and there have been no new Veteran Patients testing positive for COVID-19 in three months. The DVA Residential Facility has no Veteran Residents in its Isolation Recovery Unit and no new Veteran Residents have tested positive for COVID-19 in nine weeks. The DVA Residential Facility completed full one day testing of all Residential Veterans on July 21st with the support of the CT National Guard and Federal VA. Of the 111 Veterans tested for COVID-19, all tested negative for the virus. On July 9, 16, 23 and 30, the DVA conducted COVID-19 testing of all direct care and front-line staff in the HCC and Residential Facility resulting in all negatives for the virus. Testing was again conducted on August 6th, and we will report the results of those tests when available. The testing results to date demonstrate that the DVA COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including wearing masks, rigorous screening and ongoing testing, are keeping our Veterans and staff safe. Testing of Veterans and staff will continue as part of our ongoing efforts to mitigate the potential spread of the virus.

To date the DVA has tested two hundred and thirty-two Veteran Residents and Patients (most tested multiple times) for COVID-19 with twenty-five testing positive, most of these early in the pandemic. Of the twenty-five Veteran Residents and Patients who tested positive, twenty-two recovered from the virus. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in late April and early May due to COVID-19 complications. Five staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, with four recovering and returning to work nearly three months ago and one testing positive while out on sick leave two weeks ago and who has since tested negative and is expected to return to work soon.

We continue adherence to the DVA COVID-19 Protocols and modifications thereto which are available, along with other important information, at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.