



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

DVA COVID-19 Update: January 7, 2022

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has no COVID-19 Veteran Patients and there are no Veteran Patients in protective isolation for COVID-19 monitoring purposes due to being a recent admission or due to recently returning from a community-based healthcare provider. As the DVA experiences continued new COVID-19 cases among DVA staff, we have expanded COVID-19 testing and added additional infectious disease control procedures to minimize the risk of COVID to Veteran Patients and staff. All masking, distancing/barriers and heightened hygienic and cleaning procedures remain in place and increased COVID-19 testing will continue until further notice. The DVA is following the Governor's directives for mandatory COVID vaccine boosters for HCC staff with a compliance date of February 11th. Any HCC staff member granted a religious or medical COVID vaccine exemption is required to provide a negative COVID PCR test each week, submit to additional testing at the HCC, and to wear elevated levels of PPE particularly when with Veteran Patients.

The DVA Residential Facility has four Veteran Residents who test positive for COVID-19 this week which are the first COVID-19 cases in the Residential Facility in over eight months. In addition to the four Veteran Residents recovering in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation Unit there is one Veteran Resident who likely has COVID-19 and is pending test results. There are five Veteran Residents in the protective monitoring section of the Isolation Unit with the results of a second round of COVID-19 tests pending after presenting to the Residential Facility Clinic with minor COVID like symptoms or due to close contact tracing. The DVA has expanded monthly testing of unvaccinated Veteran Residents and Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants to include all Veteran Residents with the next full testing scheduled for January 11th. Regular on and off Campus recreational and therapeutic activities have been curtailed except for shopping trips, and activities presenting a low risk COVID-19 exposure.

Since the Pandemic began, the DVA has provided direct care to two hundred and seventy Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of which seventy-six tested positive or retested positive for COVID-19 since March 2020. Of those testing positive, sixty recovered from the virus and four remain in isolation at the DVA. One Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19, and a Veteran Patient passed away in December 2020 and one in January 2021 from COVID-19 complications. One Veteran Patient with COVID-19 passed away in December 2020 from a non-COVID-19 medical occurrence. (Note that the reduction in the number of Veterans who tested positive and who recovered is due to prior reports counting Veterans who tested positive more than once as additional Veteran testing positive.)

Of the one-hundred and four DVA staff members contracting or re-contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, eighty-eight have recovered and returned to work. Sixteen staff members, most of whom tested positive over the past week, are recovering at home and will return to work consistent with DVA clinical protocols. The DVA vaccine rate for staff is eighty-nine percent having received a first COVID vaccine dose and just over eighty percent being fully vaccinated with over thirty percent receiving a booster vaccine (fluctuations in vaccination rates are due to new staff pending vaccinations). On-Campus Vaccine clinics continue to provide COVID-19 and Flu vaccines to staff, Veteran Patients, Veteran Residents, with ninety-three percent of Veteran Patients vaccinated for the Flu.

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>.