



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

DVA COVID-19 Update: Sept. 14, 2021

The DVA Healthcare Center (HCC) had two Veteran Patients test positive for COVID-19 two weeks ago which are the first COVID-19 cases in nearly five and a half months in the HCC. Both Veterans continue their recovery in community based COVID Recovery Facilities and we hope they will be clinically cleared to return to the HCC soon. There are no COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients currently in the HCC and four Veteran Patients are being treated for various acute, non-COVID issues in community-based hospitals. Pursuant to DPH directives, the HCC temporary suspension of indoor visitation remains in place due to the two COVID positive Veterans and a staff member testing positive for COVID-19 last week. Visits will resume after we complete two weeks of testing of all Veterans and Staff with no COVID-19 cases. We continue to conduct additional rapid testing and PCR COVID-19 testing of all Veteran Patients, daily screening, and weekly testing of all HCC Staff to identify persons with the virus as soon as possible. All masking, distancing and heightened personal hygienic and facility cleaning procedures remain in place to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We are monitoring COVID-19 transmission rates in the community and are in the process of implementing DPH's and the Governor's updated directives regarding mandatory vaccination of State employees.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in five months and unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants tested negative for COVID-19 last month and another round of testing was conducted today consistent with 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-five Veteran Residents and Veteran Patients at our Campus of whom seventy-three 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 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 from a non-COVID-19 medical occurrence. Two Veteran Patients remain in community based COVID Recovery Facilities.

Of the seventy-two DVA staff members contracting (or re-contracting) COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, (one contracting the virus twice) sixty-eight recovered and returned to work. Four COVID positive HCC staff members are currently in home isolation after off Campus COVID exposure with three expected to be cleared to return to work in the next few days. Despite the COVID-19 cases in DVA staff and Veterans, our mitigation protocols and response operations are highly effective and nearly eight-two percent of staff have received their first COVID vaccine dose and nearly seventy percent are fully vaccinated.

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>