



Statement on Death of CT State Police Sergeant & COVID-19 Update: Sept. 3, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) joins with the citizens of Connecticut in mourning the loss of State Police Sergeant Brian Mohl, killed in the line of duty after being swept away by intense flooding during storm Ida. This tragedy is a reminder of the dangers faced each day by the men and women in law enforcement as they carry out their mission in protecting the public day and night – let us keep them all in our thoughts and prayers.

The 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 nearly five months. There is one Veteran Patient in self-isolation after returning to the HCC from off campus inpatient care and should be clinically cleared for release within a the next few days. Pursuant to DPH directives, the HCC has temporarily suspended indoor visitation as two staff members working in different wings tested positive for COVID-19. Visits will resume after we complete two weeks of testing of all Veterans and Staff with no COVID-19 cases. After the two most recent staff COVID cases we conducted additional rapid and PCR COVID-19 testing of all Veteran Patients with no Veterans testing positive for the virus this week and we will continue with weekly testing. We are closely monitoring increased COVID-19 transmission rates in the community and are in the process of implementing DPH's and the Governor's directives regarding mandatory vaccination of State employees.

The DVA Residential Facility has not had a COVID-19 positive Veteran Resident in nearly five months and unvaccinated Veteran Residents and all Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants tested negative for COVID-19 two weeks ago. The DVA continues 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-three 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 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.

Of the seventy DVA staff members contracting COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, (one contracting the virus twice) sixty-five recovered and returned to work. Five COVID positive HCC staff members are currently in home isolation after off Campus COVID exposure. Based on the following of our COVID-19 mitigation protocols and with all Veteran Patients and all but one Veteran Resident vaccinated there is very low risk of exposure to Veterans on campus. However, we are now conducting weekly testing of all HCC staff and Veteran Patients weekly due to the recent COVID positive staff members.

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>