

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

South Texas Veterans Health Care System
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kerrville Geriatrics & Extended Care leadership meet with Community Living Center Family Members about COVID-19

“VA’s priority is keeping everyone safe”

(KERRVILLE, TX) – 11 inpatients at the Kerrville VA Community Living Center known as the “Sky Blue Vista” neighborhood tested positive for COVID-19. The patients are currently receiving inpatient treatment at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital in San Antonio. Three employees have also tested positive.

Associate Chief of Staff for Geriatrics & Extended Care, Dr. Sandra Sanchez-Reilly met with the families of the residents last week during a Zoom meeting and provided an update on the confirmed cases. “Experts from every discipline to include pulmonologists, infectious diseases, immunologists and our wonderful nurses, lots of people that have been rounding on the patients on a daily basis to ensure the very best treatment is provided for the infected patients,” said Sanchez-Reilly. We are also protecting your loved ones here to ensure they don’t get this disease,” said Sanchez-Reilly about residents in the Sky-Blue Vista neighborhood.

In March visitation at the Kerrville VA was limited and universal masking in high-risk areas was implemented. In April a snap-shot surveillance testing of veterans and employees indicated no positive cases at the time. In June as cases increased in Texas, Kerrville Campus began weekly surveillance testing of staff and patients and also implemented the wearing of face shields while providing care to patients and to protect staff.

Infectious Diseases physicians are working closely with Community Living Center leadership providing guidance with infection prevention, reviewing interventions based on CDC recommendations, increased cleaning of the facility, daily monitoring of facilities, and technical assistance for infection control.

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Family members were provided the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting. One family member asked when the first patient was reported, other family members expressed concerns about their loved ones being moved from their normal unit. Another family expressed appreciation for taking care of their loved one but was also concerned about the nursing staff and wanted to know if they were being overworked.

“Our primary goal is to ensure that all of our staff that are caring for our Veterans are taking those moments for self-care,” said Chief Nurse Community Living Center, Margaret Green. “We have had so many changes going on that we have to ensure that we are meeting our own needs so that we may meet the needs of our veterans. That is our mission.”

Another family member praised the Kerrville Campus staff by stating “Thank you to the staff and doctors – best care ever gotten.”

South Texas leadership officials Medical Center Director/CEO, Christopher Sandles, Chief of Staff, Dr. Julianne Flynn, and Associate Director for Patient Care Services, Valerie Rodriguez-Yu also participated in the meeting. “I appreciate the engagement and comments about our staff,” said Sandles. “We are appreciative of our staff and their tireless efforts to keep your loved one safe and engaged.”

A temporary “no visitor” policy still remains in effect at Kerrville VA; however, VA can facilitate virtual visits so that family members may be able to visit with their loved ones at their convenience. Family members may contact their loved ones Kerrville VA Community Living Center neighborhood to schedule virtual visitation.

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