



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 24, 2022

## **VA implements COVID-19 health protection levels enhancing Veteran, visitor and employee safety at medical facilities**

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Administration launched three operational levels called VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels to provide a consistent, nationwide approach at its medical centers.

VA applied the three-tier safety protocol standard effective May 23, enhancing safety for Veterans, visitors and employees during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The levels align with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transmission Levels](#) designed for use by health care facilities.

“The VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels provide transparent and flexible guidelines for local facilities to help Veterans and staff know what to expect when entering a facility, despite the unpredictability of COVID-19,” said Deputy Under Secretary for Health, performing the delegable duties of the Under Secretary for Health Steven L. Lieberman, M.D. “This allows VHA facilities to provide maximum reliable access to safe, timely and quality care by adjusting safety protocols based on the fluctuation of COVID-19 levels in the community.”

Each VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Level includes guidance on personal protective equipment, screening, testing, visitation, waiting rooms, group care/therapy and staffing.

The levels are on a low, medium to high scale as described below:

- Low (when community transmission level is low): Visitors are welcome, self-screening allowed and physical distancing not required.
- Medium (when community transmission level is medium or substantial): Care partners are welcome, self-screening allowed and physical distancing not required.
- High (when community transmission level is high): Visitors are limited to the discretion of the care team on a case-by-case basis, facilities may choose to screen at the door and physical distancing required.

Masking and employee screening testing, as applicable, will remain in effect at all VHA medical facilities, regardless of health protection levels and consistent with CDC guidance for health care facilities. The VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels do not impact current requirements regarding testing and masking for employees.

Levels will be monitored weekly at each facility and updated to reflect any changes on Mondays. VHA will notify Veterans and staff by displaying signage at all facility entrances, updating levels on their local facility websites and social media. All medical center voicemails will include VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels as well.

Use the [VA medical center locator](#) to find its current level and learn more about [VHA Health Protection Levels](#).

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