

More than 100 Holyoke Soldiers' Home veterans have received 1st COVID-19 vaccine dose

U.S. Air Force Veteran Robert Aucoin, 78, gives a thumbs up after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke on Dec. 29, 2020. (Hoang 'Leon' Nguyen / The Republican)



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HOLYOKE — Nearly all of the current residents of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke have received their first COVID-19 vaccine dose, according to numbers the state provided Wednesday.

Vaccinations began Tuesday at the state-run home on Cherry Street and its sister facility in Chelsea. Vaccinations began two weeks ago in a unit at Holyoke Medical Center caring for some former Soldiers' Home residents.

State officials said 118 of the Holyoke home's 127 veterans have had their first shot. About 100 veterans live at the main home. Another 21 live in the hospital unit, and the rest are in acute care at other facilities.

An additional 166 employees at the Holyoke home have been vaccinated.

In Chelsea, 150 of 216 veterans have been vaccinated, along with 64 employees. More staff members were being vaccinated Wednesday, officials said.

The second of the two required doses will be administered during clinics at both homes on Jan. 19.

Officials are encouraging but not requiring vaccinations for residents and employees.

Both facilities have been hit hard by the pandemic. In Holyoke, 76 veterans who tested positive for the coronavirus died between late March and mid-June. A veteran living in the hospital unit died in December. In Chelsea, more than 30 veterans died.

[Story source: MassLive](#)