

# COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees  
of Southcoast Health

*Good afternoon, Southcoast colleagues.*

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## **Domestic travel update**

Per the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, a number of states have issued travel restrictions. The situation is rapidly changing. For national travel information, please visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

All travelers arriving to Massachusetts – including Massachusetts residents returning home – are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days. **Please note exception:** Beginning July 1, 2020, travelers from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, and New Jersey arriving in Massachusetts are exempt from this directive and need not self-quarantine for 14 days. However, “Essential Workers” are exempt from this requirement *only if they are asymptomatic*. All asymptomatic essential workers must self-monitor for temperature and symptoms.

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## **Inpatients requiring NH/SNF placements**

In discharging patients from our hospitals to a nursing home, skilled nursing facility, etc., we have found that a number of facilities will not accept COVID results from the Sofia units and are requiring PCR results only. Please know that our Case Managers and Laboratory leaders are aware of this challenge and have put a process in place to address the issue. For providers who are placing orders for COVID testing, please continue to order as you normally would and accurately answer the question regarding patients symptoms. The Case

Management team will notify the laboratory when a NH placement patient requires a PCR test instead of a Sofia test. The order will not need to be changed on the front end.

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### **PPE utilization updates**

We have received a number of questions regarding our current PPE practices, given our sustained decreases in COVID positive patients.

The Command Center has considered the questions raised and offers the following comments/updates in response:

ICU staff who are not providing care to a COVID-positive patient or a patient under investigation (PUI), are no longer required to wear an N95 at all times. If not wearing an N95, a procedural/droplet face mask is required.

There are no changes to the requirements for eye protection previously established.

We do not endorse nor allow the use of cloth masks for our employees and providers while they are working in our hospitals, in any of our clinical areas or while working directly with patients. A procedural/droplet mask, at minimum, is required for your protection.

Employees and providers working exclusively in administrative areas who will not cross into clinical areas nor come in contact with any patient or visitor are not required to wear a face mask unless they are unable to maintain a minimum of 6 feet (social distancing) from their co-workers.

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### **Important information on the Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions**

Southcoast recommends healthcare providers use clinical judgment and a symptom-based approach for symptomatic patients and a time-based approach for those without symptoms to determine when to

discontinue transmission-based precautions for hospitalized patients with COVID19 (SARS-CoV-2 RNA).

**Symptomatic patients with COVID-19** should remain in Transmission-Based Precautions until the following criteria are met:

***Symptom-based strategy***

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery*, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

**Asymptomatic patients with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19** should remain in Transmission-Based Precautions until the following criteria are met:

***Time-based strategy***

- 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

**Of note, there have been reports of prolonged detection of RNA without direct correlation to viral culture.**

*Please consult with ID or IP prior to the discontinuation of precautions for patients with COVID-19.*

**REFERENCES:**

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>

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## **Status report: COVID-19 cases**

The July 10 COVID-19 dashboard is available [here](#).

Southcoast's dashboards of COVID-19 data, generated by Epic, are updated daily and are [available on our intranet](#).

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For the latest updates, guidance on PPE, video messages, employee assistance and more, please [visit the Southcoast intranet](#).

Questions? Please email them to [faq@southcoast.org](mailto:faq@southcoast.org).

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*Thank you, and be well.*