

# COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees  
of Southcoast Health

*Good morning, Southcoast colleagues.*

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## **Travel Order and COVID-19 testing**

The Travel Order that went into effect on August 1, issued by Governor Baker for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has raised a number of questions from our staff and providers in terms of quarantine versus required COVID-19 PCR testing, etc.

We have worked to create processes that aim to address the questions and scenarios that are presenting.

As a reminder, under the current guidelines, those traveling or returning to Massachusetts are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days. There are few exceptions under the guidelines, which include:

- The guidance does not apply to travelers from the current list of low-risk states (Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, New Jersey and Hawaii).
- The guidance does not apply to travelers who are commuting for work or travel school/education (including from Rhode Island).
- The guidance does not apply to patients seeking specialized care.

Employees/Staff who return from travel\* will be instructed to self-quarantine for 14-days or unless/until they have negative results returned from a COVID-19 PCR test.

A negative PCR test is acceptable if administered up to 72 hours prior to arrival in Massachusetts.

If a PCR test is needed upon returning to Massachusetts, please call our dedicated COVID test scheduling line (available during normal business hours Monday-Friday) at 508-973-2035.

If ordered through Southcoast Health, the PCR testing swab will routinely be sent to Quest Laboratories for processing, which is currently experiencing a 5- to 6-day turnaround.

For any essential employees and staff who would like to request an expedited PCR test, where processing is done in house with a result available within 24 hours, a Request Form must be submitted for review/approval.

Please refrain from emailing or calling in special requests. The form can be found at [Southcoast.org/pcr-test](https://southcoast.org/pcr-test).

The form will be routed to a designated mailbox where reviewed for possible approval. If the request is denied, the testing swab will be sent to Quest Laboratories for PCR processing, as mentioned above. Please understand that Southcoast Health may deny a request for expedited testing, regardless of reason, if there are insufficient PCR supplies on hand to accommodate the request and/or if there is limited supply on hand to provide necessary diagnostic care for acutely ill patients.

*\*As is typically required, employees must receive advance approval, from their direct supervisor/manager, for all planned absences. When any travel is included in the planned absence from work, employee and the direct supervisor/manager must consider, when appropriate, the 14-day quarantine and/or test turnaround time as part of the requested time away.*

We are working to include COVID-19 testing in our New Employee Health Screenings. As part of the pre-employment health screenings, the travel guidelines above will be incorporated as follows:

- Assuming asymptomatic, any new hire who currently resides in Massachusetts, Rhode Island or any of the low-risk states will be scheduled for a Sofia Antigen test.
  - Any new hire coming to Southcoast Health from *outside* of Massachusetts, Rhode Island or an identified low-risk state will be scheduled for a PCR test. This process will be established and implemented beginning on Monday August 24. Based on the anticipated start date and the essentiality of the new hire, the same process explained above can be utilized to request an expedited PCR test.
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### **Reminder: MyChart**

All employees and staff are encouraged to register for MyChart.

MyChart provides direct and secure access to your online medical record. It allows for prescription renewals; requesting and tracking appointments; communicating with your care team; and viewing your immunization records, medical history and test results (including COVID-19 test results).

Sign up today via [Southcoast.org/mychart](https://Southcoast.org/mychart).

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

The 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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**Please stay vigilant** in following organizational and state guidelines.

Wear appropriate PPE at all times and maintain social distance whenever possible, including in break rooms and cafeterias. Let's continue keeping each other safe in order to provide exceptional care for patients while leading by example in the community.

For this week's report from Southcoast Health Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Dani Hackner, [please click here](#).

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.*