

# COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees  
of Southcoast Health

12/11/2020

*Good evening, Southcoast Colleagues.*

**In this Bulletin, you will find information on the following:**

- *Post-exposure quarantine exemptions for healthcare workers*
- *Quarantine requirements for all other employees and the public*
- *Southcoast's vaccination rollout plan, starting next week*
- *New protocols on elective procedures*
- *Monoclonal antibody infusion at the Fairhaven Urgent Care Center*
- *Helpful resources as part of Southcoast's Taking Care of You program*
- *Videos and multilingual PSAs from leaders and providers*
- *Southcoast's most recent COVID-19 dashboard and other data*

**Please scroll through the entire Bulletin to find these important updates.**

And be sure to visit Southcoast's [new and improved COVID-19 info page](#) for employees and staff.

*Thank you.*

---

## **UPDATE: Post-exposure quarantine exemptions for healthcare workers**

This week, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has issued updated guidance on post-exposure quarantine exemptions for healthcare workers, first responders and critical infrastructure workers.

Please read the following closely, as it represents important new information for Southcoast Health employees and providers:

If an **asymptomatic** individual's role is critical to preserving societal functions (for our purposes, patient care in hospitals and ambulatory centers, some clinical staff and some support services), **you may continue to work even if you have experienced an occupational exposure** – as long as you are wearing appropriate PPE, self-monitoring, and quarantining outside of work.

This exception does not apply to travel-related quarantine, wherein an employee must follow the requirements of the [travel order, information on which can be found here](#).

And, if you have a **household or community exposure**, **you *must be tested and receive a negative result before returning to work.***

If an employee or provider has tested positive **or** has COVID-19 symptoms, they are restricted from work and must isolate for at least 10 days after symptom onset or test date – whichever comes first – and be fever-free for 24 hours with improved symptoms prior to returning to work, with Employee Health clearance.

**Prior to Return to Work, an employee must notify their manager, as well as Employee Health, at [sc-covidreturn@southcoast.org](mailto:sc-covidreturn@southcoast.org).**

Ultimately, an employee's manager will decide on the best course of action for Return to Work, in accordance with Employee Health and Southcoast's new algorithm, which can be found [here for symptomatic employees](#) and [here for asymptomatic employees](#).

---

## **UPDATE: Quarantine requirements for all other employees and the public**

Also this week, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Rhode Island Department of Health released updated guidance on requirements for quarantine if an individual is exposed to the Novel Coronavirus – i.e., if you have been within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more.

While the possible incubation period for COVID-19 is still 14 days, the majority of cases have incubation periods of fewer than 10 days. Accordingly, MADPH and RIDOH have adopted the CDC's recommendations for reduced quarantine periods.

**Please see below for this important new guidance, effective immediately:**

- *7 days of strict quarantine with release on day 8 if ...*
    - Either a PCR or antigen test taken on day 5 or later is negative;  
AND
    - The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point;  
AND
    - The individual conducts active monitoring through day 14
  
  - *10 days of strict quarantine with release on day 11 if ...*
    - The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point;  
AND
    - The individual conducts active monitoring through day 14
    - No test is necessary under this option
  
  - *14 days of strict quarantine with release on day 15 if ...*
    - The individual has experienced **any** symptoms during the quarantine period **even if they have a negative COVID-19 test**;  
OR
    - The individual indicates they are unwilling or unable to conduct active monitoring
-

## **NEW: COVID-19 Vaccination Program**

Earlier today, Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Dani Hackner and Vice President of Operations Tonya Johnson, DNP, RN, sent a letter announcing Southcoast's initial shipment of COVID-19 vaccine, expected next week.

Phase 1a will mobilize immediately to vaccinate the entire COVID-facing internal workforce, including physicians and providers, nurses, Food & Nutrition and EVS, home health workers, and others.

You can [find the full communication here](#).

---

## **NEW: Elective procedures**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health released updated guidance this week that directs all Massachusetts hospitals, beginning today, December 11, to postpone or cancel nonessential elective invasive procedures that impact inpatient capacity.

- Hospitals are required to make every effort to preserve inpatient capacity by cancelling nonessential electives and redeploying staff.
- Providers at each hospital shall use their clinical judgement on a case by case basis regarding any invasive procedures that must be done. The ultimate decision about whether a procedure is essential or nonessential is based on the clinical judgement of the patient's needs and should align with the resurgence planning developed by the hospital.
- DPH defines nonessential elective procedures as procedures that are scheduled in advance because the procedure does not involve a medical emergency and where delay will not be adverse to the patient's health.
- Preventative services, pediatric care or immunizations, and necessary inpatient procedures that would lead to high risk or significant

worsening of the patient's condition if deferred should continue; they are not required to be cancelled under this guidance.

---

### **NEW: Monoclonal Antibody Infusion at Fairhaven Urgent Care**

Starting as soon as Tuesday (please stay tuned for updates), the Fairhaven Urgent Care Center will close to the public from 2pm to 8pm on weekdays in order to stage Monoclonal Antibody Infusion for patients directed and scheduled through their PCP.

The last appointment accepted will be for 1pm, and walk-in patients will be directed to Southcoast Urgent Care centers in Dartmouth and Wareham, or to a telehealth option if appropriate.

We are alerting the public to this change via the Southcoast website and social media.

---

### **UPDATE: Taking Care of You**

The winter and holiday seasons can often be a difficult time for many people to navigate, and this year may be an especially challenging time for some of our valued team members and their families.

That's why Southcoast Health is committed to [Taking Care of You During the Holidays](#) throughout this winter season and beyond – with resources, support and some special offerings to lighten your days and help you stay healthy.

These programs are Southcoast's way of saying thank you. Thank you for coming to work each day, for giving it your all and for helping us provide exceptional care to the community we're proud to call home.

---

## VIDEO: A tour of the Southcoast PPE warehouse



Join Phil Oliveira, Vice President of Support Services, for a fascinating virtual tour of Southcoast's newest supply warehouse, stood up and stocked during the pandemic.

[Please click here](#) or the image to view.

---

## VIDEOS: Physician PSAs in English, Portuguese and Spanish



Southcoast Health Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Dani Hackner, Primary Care Physician Dr. Carlos Correia and Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Eliesel Lacerda De La Cruz recently filmed a series of PSAs for the City of New Bedford in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

[Please click here](#) or the image to view and share these important video messages.

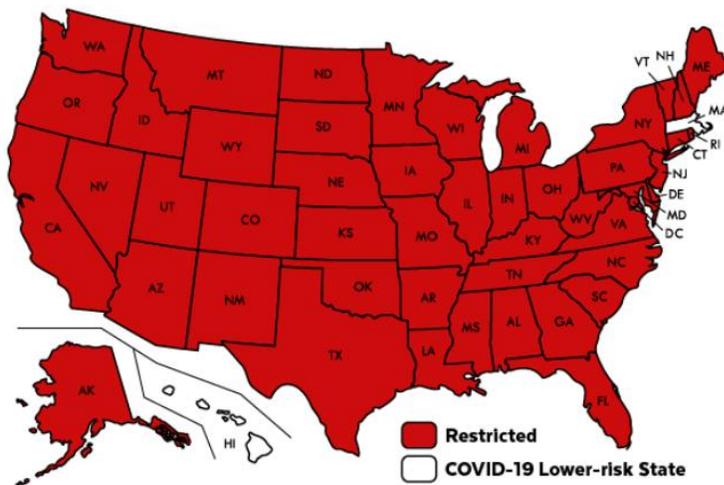
---

## STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases

- As of 5pm on December 11, we currently have 95 patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 hospitalized across our system – 14 of those patients are in Intensive Care Units.
- In addition, we currently have 39 patients under investigation (PUI) currently hospitalized across our system – 7 of those patients are in ICU.

COVID-19 daily dashboards, generated by the Southcoast Analytics Team, are available [here](#).

## UPDATE: The MA DPH travel map



We publish the updated map on our intranet to keep employees and providers informed. As a reminder, all individuals entering Massachusetts must complete and submit the [online Massachusetts Travel Form \(MTF\)](#) unless coming into Massachusetts from a lower-risk state (currently, only Hawaii), commuting for work or school or seeking/receiving medical treatment.

Additional exemptions include someone passing through Massachusetts, military personnel and critical infrastructure workers.

In addition to completing the MTF, anyone entering Massachusetts without an exemption listed above and/or entering from a high-risk state must quarantine for 14 days or have received a negative PCR test result from a sample obtained not longer than 72 hours before their arrival into Massachusetts.

Entering the state of Rhode Island from a higher-risk state has the same quarantining and testing requirements.

Please note, if you live in Rhode Island and work in Massachusetts, you are exempt from the travel restrictions above (even though Rhode Island is considered a higher-risk state) as long as you are commuting for work or education only.

**If you qualify for this exemption, again due to work or education, it does not extend to recreational activities.**

To be clear, because an individual has an exemption to travel between these two states, for work or education, does not mean that the individual is also able to travel between the same states for recreational purposes (beach, dinner, etc.). Please know that any individual who violates the state Travel Orders could be subject to daily fines.

---

For testing information, guidance on PPE, hotlines and much more, please visit Southcoast's [redesigned COVID-19 info page](#) for employees and staff.

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

---

*Thank you, and be well.*