

COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees
of Southcoast Health

May 21, 2021

Greetings, Southcoast Colleagues.

In this Bulletin, you will find the following:

- New guidance removing testing requirement for vaccinated patients
- Revised Return to Work (RTW) algorithms for asymptomatic exposures
- Clarification on face covering, screening and gathering protocols
- Update on the Southcoast vaccination program and multilingual PSAs
- Stories from the **#SouthcoastFrontlines**: A salute to our Critical Care staff
- Please scroll through the entire Bulletin to find these important updates.

And be sure to visit Southcoast's [COVID-19 Employee Hub](#).

Thank you.

UPDATE: Removal of pre-procedure testing for fully vaccinated patients

Beginning on May 24 for new surgery/procedure appointments being scheduled, the requirement for COVID-19 testing 48-72 hours before the surgery/procedure will be removed for patients who have been fully vaccinated at least 14-days prior and/or those who have tested positive within 90 days and are symptom-free.

This guidance applies to all interventional procedures and surgical cases, including Family Centered Units (for pre-scheduled C-section patients and new parents who are fully vaccinated).

Please note that evidence of full vaccination should be visible in Epic. If not found, the patient must provide an updated vaccination card at time of scheduling, which will need to be scanned into the Media section within the patient's EPIC record.

If proof cannot be provided, a COVID-19 test will need to be scheduled for 48-72 hours before admission.

For the full revised guidance, [please click here](#).

UPDATE: RTW algorithm for asymptomatic employees

In accordance with CDC and MA DPH guidance, the Southcoast Infection Prevention Department has eliminated post-exposure household and community work restrictions for asymptomatic employees who are fully vaccinated and/or fully recovered from COVID-19 in the prior 90 days.

For the revised RTW algorithm, [please click here](#).

Please note that **post-travel quarantine has been eliminated** for fully vaccinated individuals (find more details below, under screening information).

UPDATE: Protocols for masking, screening and gathering

Governor Baker announced this week that Massachusetts will “fully reopen” on May 29, with the Commonwealth’s State of Emergency Order ending on June 15.

Southcoast will continue to share information relevant to the care of our patients, safety of our staff and daily operations. For now, please note the following:

Per state mandate regarding healthcare facilities and providers, **masks must still be worn by everyone in Southcoast facilities at all times**, although N95s will only be required when caring for a patient under investigation (PUI) or COVID-positive patient or performing an aerosol generating procedure (AGP). N95s will no longer be required at all times in the Emergency Departments.

Our screening processes will continue. This includes existing staffed screening stations at entry points, which will remain in place, as well as employee attestation processes – with the following updates for **fully vaccinated individuals**:

- If you [travel in the United States](#), you do not need to get tested before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel.
- You need to pay close attention to [the situation at your international destination](#) before traveling outside the United States.
- You do NOT need to get tested before leaving the United States unless your destination requires it.
- You still need to [show a negative test result](#) or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding an international flight to the United States.
- You should still get tested 3-5 days after international travel. You do NOT need to self-quarantine after arriving in the United States.

Our **gathering policy** – which allows for in-person breaks and meetings among fully vaccinated staff, with a limit of 10 people to a room – will continue with no changes for now.

IMPORTANT: Please maintain social distancing at all times as a baseline intervention, and ensure that patients and visitors do so, as well.

Visit Southcoast's [COVID-19 Employee Hub](#) for more information.

UPDATE: Southcoast's vaccination programs



As of this writing, Southcoast has administered nearly 95,000 doses of vaccine overall, while fully vaccinating upward of 56,000 people.

Our public clinics in Dartmouth, Fall River and Wareham continue, as do the Southcoast Mobile Wellness Van stops. [All of these opportunities](#) are walk-up and require no appointment.

Please share [this information](#) with family, friends and neighbors who have not been vaccinated. Getting your shot has never been more convenient – or more important.

For details on employee clinics, [please click here](#).

For new PSAs from Dr. Carlos Correia (Portuguese) and Dr. Eliesel Lacerda De La Cruz (Spanish), [click here](#). The videos are also available on YouTube ([POR](#); [ESP](#)).

VIDEO: Stories from the #SouthcoastFrontlines



Our third in a series of videos highlights the many contributions and sacrifices made by Critical Care staff at Charlton Memorial, St. Luke's and Tobey during the pandemic. Click [here](#) or the image above to view this poignant and inspiring video.

STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases

As of this morning, we currently have 23 patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 hospitalized across our system – two of those patients are in Intensive Care Units.

In addition, we currently have six PUI currently hospitalized across our system – with no PUI in ICU.

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

Thank you, and be well.