

COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees
of Southcoast Health

July 30, 2021

Greetings, Southcoast Colleagues.

In this Bulletin, you will find the following:

- **REMINDERS: Employee exposure and testing, COVID-19 Hotline, return to work.**
- **UPDATE: CDC guidance on masking**
- **REMAIN CAUTIOUS: Social distancing and in-person indoor gatherings**
- **UPDATE: Southcoast vaccination**
- **STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases**

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

Thank you.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS: Employee exposure and testing, COVID-19 Hotline for employees, return to work.

Employee exposure and testing

If you have symptoms associated with COVID-19 (such as fever or chills, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea), OR if you have had close contact or unprotected exposure to someone with COVID-19, **you must get tested, even if you are fully vaccinated.**

You can **schedule a COVID-19 PCR test through MyChart**. **This is the preferred way to schedule a test**. Log in at any time of day to set up an appointment. It takes only about five minutes to answer a few questions and select an appointment date and time.

COVID-19 Hotline

If you are symptomatic, you can call the **COVID-19 Hotline** at **(508) 973-4YOU** (4968). Our Nursing Triage team will assess your situation and advise you on what to do next.

You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at (508) 973-4YOU (4968) for test scheduling.

The Hotline is available Mon-Sat, 8am – 5pm.

Return to work (RTW)

You CANNOT come to work if you have symptoms associated with COVID-19. You must stay home, self-isolate while waiting for test results, wear a mask and distance yourself from household members, and notify your manager.

You can return to work only after you are fever-free for at least 24 hours, your symptoms have improved, 10 days have elapsed since symptom onset (or first positive test) AND you receive clearance from Employee Health. You may end self-isolation on day 11.

When you are ready to return to work, you must complete the online Return to Work Form at: www.southcoast.org/covidreturn. If you have any problems with this form working correctly, contact the Help Desk.

If you are asymptomatic and have had close contact or unprotected exposure, you must follow guidelines for returning to work.

For complete details on exposure, testing, and return to work, refer to **[FAQ: Exposure, testing and return to work \(RTW\) for healthcare workers](#)**.

Refer also to **[Return to Work Decision Algorithm for Asymptomatic Employees](#)**.

UPDATE: CDC guidance on masking

The CDC has issued updated guidance on indoor masking for all people (vaccinated and unvaccinated) in high-risk locations. Bristol county is among those counties included in CDC guidance on indoor masking. Infection rates are rising once again. Masking is encouraged while indoors in public places.

There has been an outbreak of 765+ cases in Provincetown related to the delta variant. It is vital not to let our guard down during this critical time in the pandemic.

Safer activities for you and your family

- If you are fully vaccinated, you can participate in many of the activities that you did before the pandemic.
- **To maximize protection from the delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.**
- Wearing a mask is most important if you have a weakened immune system or if, because of your age or an underlying medical condition, you are at increased risk for severe disease, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated. If this applies to you or your household, *you might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission in your area.*
- You should continue to wear a mask where required by laws, rules, regulations, or local guidance.

More information from the CDC on safe activities and how to protect yourself when fully vaccinated is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>.

Important of proper mask wearing

- We have observed some staff lax on appropriate masking in clinical areas.
- We can safely care for patients with current guidelines including vaccination and appropriate PPE (including masks).

- We must be consistent on masks in clinical areas and wear them correctly.

How **NOT** to Wear a Mask



"The Escape Hatch"



"The Earring"



"The Sniffer"



"The Stache"



"The Nose Plug"



"The Neckbeard"

REMAIN CAUTIOUS: Social distancing and in-person indoor gatherings

We remain vigilant with administrative and environmental controls that facilitate social distancing for all staff, patients and visitors. Please maintain social distancing at all times as a baseline intervention, and please ensure that patients and visitors do so as well.

Our gathering policy – which allows for in-person breaks and meetings among fully vaccinated staff, with a limit of 10 people to a room – continues. We must also be cautious in breakrooms while eating/drinking.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and understanding.

UPDATE: Southcoast vaccination

- *Vaccination is highly effective against the delta variant in preventing severe illness!*
- *Southcoast will be proceeding with mandatory vaccination with rare exemptions for medical or religious reasons.*

Vanity Fair Vaccine Clinic Closing July 31

The vaccination site at Vanity Fair in Dartmouth will close as of July 31, 5pm. However, vaccines are still being offered through that date. The schedule is posted at www.southcoast.org/covid-19-vaccination. **Walk-ups are welcome**, or you can save a spot by scheduling an [appointment](#).

Southcoast thanks all of the many teams and individuals who worked on standing up our public vaccination sites. It was a complex undertaking that required a great deal of coordination and the hard work of a lot of people. The clinics were a great success! The number of vaccine doses administered approached 100,000.

Vaccination to begin at medical practices

Southcoast will very soon offer COVID-19 vaccination at medical practices in the Dartmouth, Fall River and Wareham areas. Each site will be open one day a week and offering the Pfizer vaccine. Appointments and walk-ups will be welcome. Additional details regarding operating schedules and locations will be posted soon.

Southcoast thanks the commitment and dedication of staff working to make practice-based clinics possible. Continuing to offer vaccination is critically important to patients, employees and the public and to the wellbeing of the region.

The Southcoast Mobile Wellness Van will continue to offer vaccination in the community. The schedule is available online at www.southcoast.org/covid-19-vaccination.

Please share information about Southcoast's vaccine clinics with your friends and family who have not been vaccinated!

STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases

Currently, we have 19 patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 hospitalized across our system – with 3 positive cases in ICU. In addition, we currently have 6 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.