



COVID-19 Update

Message from Chief Medical Officer COVID-19 Update

We know that you continue to have a number of questions about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the planning and preparation efforts underway across our health care system. To streamline communications and maintain consistency, I will be sending regular updates and information that may impact our day-to-day operations.

We have also created a central repository on our intranet page [COVID-19 Guidance and Resources](#) for the latest information and clinical guidance for hospitals, ambulatory care clinics, nursing homes, correctional health services and home care operations. The page also has links to important external resources and education materials for patients and community. Please visit this page regularly to find the most updated resources.

Yesterday, the Mayor reported four confirmed cases in NYC, with the majority of people tested in NYC returning negative for COVID-19. We expect to see more cases as community transmission becomes more common. As health care workers, we have a responsibility to be prepared and vigilant, not alarmed.

In today's message, I'd like to provide updates on **PPE conservation, employee leave policy, and the city's new mandatory testing policy for employees who may have exposure.**

Conservation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) During COVID-19

We all need to work together to conserve our personal protective equipment (PPE), including N95 respirators, surgical masks and precaution gowns, so that we are able to protect our staff and provide safe care for all patients. Conservation does not mean that we put our health care workers at risk or that we decrease the quality of care for our patients. Conservation does mean that we are thoughtful and strategic about how we use the available PPE and anticipate shortfalls in supply. View our PPE conservation strategy [here](#).

Employee Leave Policy

Employees must contact their supervisor immediately upon identifying themselves in a risk category as outlined in the CDC guidelines and the [NYC Health + Hospitals leave policy](#).

Supervisors should refer employees who fall under the CDC defined risk categories to Occupational Health Services or their private physician for continued follow-up.

Employees or supervisors should call OHS before referring an employee in order to determine best method of communication/assessment/tracking.

Travel, Testing and Self-Isolation

The NYC Department of Health is asking New Yorkers who return from the following countries to self-isolate for 14 days as a precaution: China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan. In addition, effective March 5, educators, healthcare workers, or first responder employed by the City of New York, including NYC Health + Hospitals, who are determined to present a danger of infection to others, will have to submit to testing for COVID-19.

Employees who are required to undergo testing will be prohibited from returning to work until there is a negative test result or until the Department determines the employee no longer presents a danger of infection to others. To determine whether testing applies to you, view the criteria [here](#).

Please note, NYC Health + Hospitals does not restrict employee travel. However, the advice for all New Yorkers is to avoid nonessential travel to affected areas. If an employee

travels to one of the affected areas, they may be subject to the mandatory testing policy now in place.

These changes require that NYC Health + Hospitals employees at all levels participate fully and actively to ensure our health system is well positioned to continue to provide safe, high quality care for all New Yorkers.

We appreciate your partnership and support during this time. If you have any questions, please reach out to your manager or write to us at COVID-19Readiness@nychhc.org.



Mabelle Allen, MD
Chief Medical Officer

