

COVID-19 Update

Date: Wednesday, December 29, 2021

To: Everyone at HHS, clinical and physician leaders

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Subject: **Universal patient testing for COVID-19 upon admission**

What's new

We will be moving to a universal testing approach to all patients requiring admission to hospital as an additional means to try to reduce risk of patient-to-patient transmission, and potential outbreaks. This measure is due to the rising COVID community epidemiology. This will be put in effect Thursday, December 30, 2021.

This means all unexposed and asymptomatic patients being admitted to hospital will have an oral/nasal COVID only swab ([instructions](#) and [video](#)) conducted for surveillance (regardless of past COVID history or vaccine status). This can be done by nursing staff once admission orders are completed under [Medical Directive MD 49006](#) "*Collection of Nasopharyngeal Swab or an Acceptable alternative Swab for COVID-19 at HHS*" using Meditech order entry code COVID19.

Oral/Nasal Swabs are the preferred swab to use, but if not available, an NPS swab can be used to conduct an Oral/Nasal swab. Patients refusing a test will be monitored for symptoms.

Supporting patient flow

To support patient flow, transfers should proceed while awaiting swab results. A COVID test is conducted on every patient admitted to hospital from any setting or residence.

These asymptomatic/unexposed patients are deemed "negligible COVID risk" and thus do not require additional precautions pending their test results. They are admitted to the most appropriate unit based upon their admitting diagnosis.

If their COVID test is positive, they will be put in additional precautions and may or may not be moved to a COVID unit depending on the patient's circumstances and site operational plans.

- In some circumstances, a COVID test may result positive due to a high cycle threshold (Ct) value. In such a circumstance, infection control will contact the clinical unit to request a repeat oral/nasal test in 24hours (using meditech directive MD49006). These patients will be placed in Droplet/Contact Plus N95 precautions pending their second test.

As per usual practices, all patients with COVID symptoms or COVID exposures should be tested and put into Droplet Contact Plus N95 precautions.

Please see our [revised testing principles](#) and revised COVID Risk Status (CRS) order set.

Thank you.

Kirsten and Sarah