COVID-19 Guidance for Healthcare Workers

WHAT IS COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold. Those who are older than 60, have underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease, and diabetes, are particularly at risk.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. If the LHD does not have supplies to meet the request, or the LHD is unreachable, LTCFs should complete an ICS 213 RR form (sample below) following the guidance outlined and email to isdhdeplogistics@isdh.in.gov.

FACILITIES SHOULD FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

This guidance also applies to other healthcare workers in the following facilities:

- Nursing Homes
- Residential Care Facilities
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Residential Care & Assistance Program Providers
- Housing with Services Establishments
- Intermediate Care Facilities for IDD, including Group Homes
- Rehabilitation Hospitals
- State Psychiatric Hospitals
- Free Standing Psychiatric Hospitals
- Staff who work in Hospice, EMS and Dialysis Centers

HEALTHCARE WORKERS WITH POTENTIAL COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Healthcare workers that, in a healthcare setting, have been potentially exposed to patients with confirmed COVID-19, should follow CDC guidance linked below. This guidance includes considerations for managing healthcare workers with exposure who are asymptomatic.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html

CLOSE CONTACT AND RISK LEVELS

Close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case or secondary the provider has a high risk of coming in contact with respiratory droplets (for example, if a healthcare worker not wearing PPE is coughed on during the suctioning of a patient or while giving a nebulizer treatment).
Healthcare facilities need to identify the risk of the healthcare worker:

For additional information, visit https://coronavirus.in.gov.

High Risk: the healthcare worker (HCW) had close contact with COVID-19 patient and neither had a face mask.

Medium Risk: healthcare worker had close contact with COVID-19 patient who wore a face mask and the HCW did not wear a face mask

Low Risk: Brief interaction with the patient with COVID-19 or close contact with patients who were wearing a facemask while healthcare worker was wearing a face mask.

HEALTHCARE WORKERS WITH NO DIRECT PATIENT CONTACT AND NO ENTRY INTO ACTIVE PATIENTS MANAGED AREAS WHO ADHERE TO ROUTINE SAFETY PROCEDURES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED NOT AT RISK.

LEVELS OF MONITORING

- **Self-monitoring** – HCW should not return to work during self-monitoring. They should monitor themselves by taking temperature twice a day and be alert to respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath)
- **Active Monitoring** – HCW should not return to work during active monitoring. State or local health department assumes responsibility for communicating with potentially exposed people to assess for fever or respiratory symptoms. This can be delegated by the health department to the healthcare facility.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Facilities should develop a plan for how to screen for symptoms and evaluate ill healthcare workers. For instance, on days the healthcare worker is scheduled to work, the facility should take the temperature and assess for symptoms prior to starting work or have the healthcare worker report their temperature and absence of symptoms prior to starting work.

If the healthcare worker begins to exhibit symptoms, such as cough, sore throat, fever or shortness of breath, they must be sent home for self-quarantine and testing immediately.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: https://coronavirus.in.gov