Expanding COVID-19 Identification, Testing Locally

As COVID-19 continues to place demands on our providers and resources, we are moving to a new phase of our preparedness efforts. One change is regarding inpatient test requests for COVID-19; until now, testing approval came centrally in direct consultation with the Wolff Center. We used known features and risk factors, and we evaluated how the virus was moving into our region and how our own testing capabilities arose.

Now we will decentralize critical decision making to the local level, directly engaging our robust network of clinical providers to drive care decisions. We can offer more timely testing by having approval of those decisions through local facility leadership.

Here is what you can expect in this next phase:

Local Command Centers
Command centers will open across our system, led by facility leadership, including VPMAs, infection prevention physicians, and the infection prevention team. They will oversee testing requests, management, and support for frontline staff. The Wolff Center Command Center will aid all local teams through consultation and guidance throughout the duration.

Clinical Criteria
Clinical criteria and screening guidelines are updated to provide guidance for providers in inpatient, outpatient/urgent care/ED discharges, and employee health.

Key indicators for screenings include:

- An illness compatible with a viral respiratory infection,
- Close contact with an individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 disease,
  and, in some cases,
- A travel history (to sites with known high COVID-19 illness frequency.

Details are included in the Clinical Criteria Guidance for Screening and Testing.

Expansion of Testing
Starting on Friday, March 20, at 5 p.m., inpatient providers will be able to screen and electronically place a referral for a testing order into the electronic health record. Outpatient provider orders will be available at noon, Saturday, March 21. New workflows will facilitate this process.

Inpatient — Physicians can order a COVID-19 test in Cerner for a patient who meets the clinical criteria. Each order is reviewed by the local command center team (VPMA, infectious disease physician, and infection preventionist). If approved, the collection and testing is facilitated through the local lab. Details are included in the Inpatient Testing Workflow.

Outpatient — Providers can refer a patient who meets the clinical criteria for a COVID-19 test through Epic. The Wolff Center will review the referral and contact the patient to arrange specimen collection and testing, if approved. Details are included in the Outpatient Testing Workflow.

Employee Health — Employee Health providers also now can refer health care workers who meet the clinical criteria for a COVID-19 test. The Wolff Center will review the referral and contact the patient to arrange specimen collection and testing, if approved. Details are included in the Employee Health Testing Workflow.

Regional Collection Centers
Regional collection sites, modeled after our UPMC collection center on Pittsburgh's South Side, will open next week in Altoona, Erie, Harrisburg, and Williamsport to enhance local testing efforts.

Check-in Kiosks
Use of kiosks and biometric, or fingerprint, scanners will be discontinued to limit potential virus transmission at this frequently used touch point. In addition, this helps limit multiple patients waiting in close proximity. Patient-facing signage will exist nearby turned-off kiosk monitors.

COVID-19 infection is here in our region; we are on the front lines, ready to care for patients locally in every one of our communities. Our plans will evolve and aid you, our front-line caregivers.

We will do the right things at the right times, focused on patients and on you, our colleagues. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions as we begin implementing these changes across UPMC.

Thank you for all you do to protect our communities during this challenging time.

Tami Minnier, Chief Quality Officer, UPMC

Graham Snyder, MD, MS, Medical Director, Infection Prevention and Hospital Epidemiology, UPMC

Donald M. Yealy, MD, Senior Medical Director and Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, UPMC

Press Conference

Today, Graham Snyder, John Williams, and Don Yealy participated in a press conference about our ongoing preparedness efforts, testing capabilities, and elective surgeries. Key points from the briefing include:

- Dr. Williams' research shows there is currently no widespread community transmission.

- Dr. Yealy reinforced that some elective surgeries or care episodes are necessary to provide high-quality care for our patients, and while we have deferred many that are not, we do so with physician, staff, and patient input and concerns. Our approach meets all recommended approaches.

- Dr. Snyder noted that we have an adequate supply of protective equipment, and we are taking all appropriate measures to protect our staff from COVID-19 and to support them if they feel they have been exposed.

You can watch the press conference here.

Check-in Kiosks

Use of kiosks and biometric, or fingerprint, scanners is discontinued immediately.

Place this sign over the kiosk screen. It reads, "To prevent the spread of germs, check-in kiosks and biometric scanners will be discontinued until further notice. Please check-in at the front desk."

If you are in a clinic or area where the kiosks and biometric scanners must be used in order to effectively check patients in, please follow the guidelines below:

- Place this sign next to each kiosk and biometric scanner. It reads, "Use hand sanitizer before and after using the kiosk and biometric scanner"
- Ensure that hand sanitizer is available at each kiosk and biometric scanner
- Ensure that a staff member wipes down the kiosk and biometric with Clorox or PDI wipes frequently

Outpatient Visit Schedule Review and Prescheduling Screening

All patients with existing appointments should be contacted by their provider's office prior to their scheduled appointment.

When speaking with a patient, the provider should first offer a telemedicine appointment, then a phone call with the physician. **Use these scripts to help guide conversations** with your patient. If the patient would like to keep their in-person appointment, the provider should encourage rescheduling the appointment or use proper travel and COVID-19 screening questions.

In an effort to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in our outpatient physician practices, patients will be triaged by the practice prior to scheduling their appointment. Telemedicine and phone visits will be our preferred visit mediums.

Review **COVID-19 Outpatient Recommendations on Infonet** for more information.

Follow N-95 Respirator Guidelines, Conserve PPE

Following appropriate **N-95 Respirator Usage Guidelines** is a necessary PPE Conservation practice.

As it becomes commonplace to be caring for patients with COVID-19 illness in our hospitals and facilities, we must carefully use personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies now to ensure future availability.

Supply Chain is always exploring alternatives, but please follow conservation guidelines. Many other organizations will be seeking the same items, and we must use our supplies smartly.

Updated COVID-19 Pharmacological Treatment Options

The COVID-19 therapeutics team has today released an updated version of the COIVD-19 treatment regimen, containing recommendations for the treatment and management of COVID-19. **Please view the treatment regimen** and share with your staff as appropriate.

Staff Safety and Wellness Resources

From personal health and work-specific questions, to child care and working from home resources, check out the Personal Preparation and Work Arrangements page on Infonet and share it with your teams.

Ongoing Elective Clinical Care

We continue to **safely** serve those who seek our care, and the voices of many involved in care have been heard. Our approach inside the COVID-19 spread is based on the principle of matching current conditions, patient factors, and how we expect the future to develop. Our plans are guided centrally with input from many care experts across our sites and from many disciplines.

Our pillars for safe and prudent care are:

- Emergency care is always our top priority

- Elective cases and care are broad and indistinct terms since many scheduled care opportunities address very important needs and essential health opportunities. Some elective care is necessary care.

- We have carefully and thoughtfully chosen an approach that does not broadly shun physician decision making or input. In other words, we are not unilaterally demanding the broad cancellation of anything.

- Our approach is consistent with many other academic centers and broad guidelines. We are intentionally being very transparent and thoughtful with you about this approach.

- Our unwavering goal is to be ready ahead of more strenuous times, to protect our patents, and to protect our care teams and all our staff.

We embrace that many of our patients will cancel their care or procedures. And we embrace that you and your teams may prioritize care opportunities, and that you may decide that some care is not needed or can be done differently.

To dampen concerns, we will begin screening patients and providers before arrival and we have ramped up COVID-19 testing opportunities, as we all know that asymptomatic carriers exist. We will review schedules and engage the care teams on opportunities to defer care. We want you to continue to use the appropriate precautions and protections for yourselves and all patients — smartly and matched to risk — allowing safe care for all.

We continue to count on you and your teams to act on UPMC recommendations as we monitor closely the current and future needs and demands. Our goal is to ensure that we serve our patients and each other well — now, a week from now, and months from now — with confidence and protection.

Meeting Unique Needs in Behavioral Health Setting

In our efforts to protect our patients, staff, and community, the UPMC Western Behavioral Health service line has put in place Inpatient Procedural Behavioral Health Guidelines. These guidelines include measures to account for the unique settings present in inpatient behavioral health, such as milieu therapy, and as part of the implementation, **no visitors will be permitted for our inpatient behavioral health patients** at this time.

Audiocare Appointment Reminders

Audiocare appointment reminders have stopped due to the evolving COVID-19 environment and the volume of patient appointment changes. This includes all text messages and appointment-related phone calls. Other Audiocare process are not impacted with this change.

Consistent Inpatient Visitation Hours

UPMC hospital inpatient visitation hours have been limited to 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. After certain times, access points to our hospitals will decrease, with some only being through the Emergency Department. A full listing of hospital access points is available in Visitation Resources for Staff on Infonet.

As a reminder:

Hospitals and outpatient facilities are <u>not</u> currently clinically screening visitors, employees, or non-UPMC providers and vendors. If that decision changes, aligned system guidelines will be provided. Employees are stationed at entrances to explain our temporary visitation guidelines. Use these talking points to guide compassionate conversations.

All UPMC Senior Communities long-term care facilities <u>are</u> clinically screening all pre-shift UPMC employees, non-UPMC providers and vendors, and special-approved visitors at this time. Clinical screening guidelines at all UPMC Senior Communities, in line with government mandates, have increased to include questionnaire and taking body temperatures. Any person with a temperature of 100.0 degrees or greater is not permitted facility entry. This clinical screening is not currently applicable for transitional care units (TCUs) inside hospitals — aligned system guidelines will be provided as this changes.

Clinical Care Delivery Infonet Page

A new Clinical Care Delivery Infonet page contains important guidelines and other relevant content for clinicians. This page will serve as a "one-stop-shop" for COVID-19 clinical management resources.
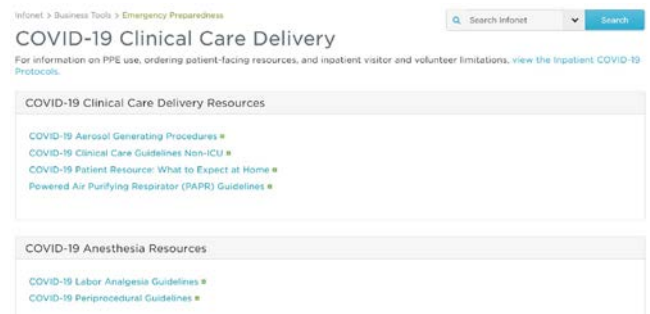
Social Media Policies and Guidelines

With the increasing activity on social media by healthcare workers with the COVID-19 response, we remind everyone of our obligations to protect the privacy of our patients. Even indirect information (location, date, time, clinical scenario) can be used to identify patients and violates UPMC policy and HIPAA law. When using social media, it is important to:

- **Protect patient privacy.**
  - Employees may not disclose any identifiable patient information on social media, including photos. Privacy applies to your co-workers as well — don't post photos of a staff party or your colleague working on the unit without permission.

- **Keep confidential information confidential.**
  - Information that you learn as part of your job at UPMC – patient or business -is confidential.

- **Recognize that personal doesn't always mean private.**
  - In social media, the lines between personal and professional, as well as public and private, can be blurred. While you may be posting on your personal Facebook page, you are still perceived as a UPMC employee, and your comment may be viewed as a reflection of UPMC by a co-worker or a patient.

For additional information, review the social media policies and guidelines on Infonet.

Patient Communications: Current Print Shop Capabilities

Communication materials are [available to order from the UPMC Print Center](#) to communicate COVID-19 and precautionary measures to patients. Due to Pennsylvania's closure of non-life-sustaining businesses, the external vendor who prints items larger than 11 x 17 is not available. We strongly recommend you use the two size options available from our in-house printshop. Larger sizes are available upon special request but turnaround times may be unpredictable.

Posters/signs are available in 8.5 x 11 and 11 x 17 sizes using the following materials:

- Regular paper stock
- Thick card stock
- Removeable vinyl cling decal