

## **Health Advisory**

### **COVID-19 Updates: Risk Assessment and Testing Recommendations to Support Safe Reopening**

June 10, 2020

While widespread transmission of COVID-19 continues in metropolitan Philadelphia, daily case counts and hospitalization rates have been steadily decreasing, suggesting that prevention measures and social distancing have been making an impact. Due to these decreases, both the Wolf and Kenney administrations moved Philadelphia County to the yellow phase of COVID-19 containment on June 5, 2020. This step is an important one for economic recovery; however, ongoing vigilance will also be crucial to prevent a significant resurgence in cases. As such, all Philadelphians will need to follow recommended social distancing and masking practices as they engage in work and social activities. Another key component of safe reopening is rapid case identification and contact tracing. This will require broader access to testing services for both persons with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and persons who may have been exposed to persons with COVID-19, regardless of symptoms. Guidance regarding the definition of a COVID-19 exposure has also been updated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strict adherence to isolation and quarantine recommendations will also be important. As such, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health makes the following recommendations:

#### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Rapid case identification and contact tracing are key components of safe reopening.
- Providers should offer testing to all persons with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and asymptomatic persons who have been exposed to COVID-19 or who are part of a congregate setting.
- Exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case for **15 minutes** during the case's contagious period, which starts 48 hours before symptom onset until isolation is lifted.

- Offer COVID-19 testing to persons of any age who present with new-onset:
  - Cough OR
  - Shortness of breath OR
  - Two of the following symptoms: fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, new loss of taste or smell
- Prioritize testing of symptomatic persons who are:
  - Hospitalized
  - At increased risk for severe disease (advanced age (> 60 years), and/or presence of pre-existing chronic medical conditions)
  - Residents and staff in congregate settings (i.e., nursing homes, behavioral health facilities, personal care homes, shelters and prisons)
  - Healthcare workers
  - Public safety workers (Police, Fire, EMS)
  - Other essential workers (mass transit workers, grocery store/pharmacy staff, etc.)
  - Close contacts of known cases or persons who are associated with a known cluster of cases regardless of age
- Offer testing to asymptomatic persons who are close contacts of a known case. PDPH recommends exposed, asymptomatic persons wait to be tested until at least 7 days after exposure due to the average incubation period for COVID-19. Tests performed a few days within exposure are not likely to be positive even in persons who eventually become infected.
- Offer testing to asymptomatic persons who are part of a cluster of cases, especially in congregate settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain in consultation with PDPH/

- Exposure should be considered for:
  - Persons who had close contact with a case: close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case for at least **15 minutes** during the case's contagious period, which starts 48 hours before symptom onset until isolation is lifted. An asymptomatic person who tests positive should be considered contagious from 48 hours before the test date until the case meets criteria for discontinuation of isolation.
  - Household contacts of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case.
  - Healthcare workers who perform an aerosol generating procedure with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case without appropriate PPE regardless of the duration of the procedure.
- Instruct exposed persons to self-quarantine and avoid contact with others for 14 days after the last exposure. This includes staying home from work or school, wearing a mask when around others, avoiding contact with persons at-risk for severe disease, and monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 as detailed above.
- Instruct patients who are awaiting test results to remain at home under isolation. Those who test positive and do not require hospitalization should continue isolation for at least 10 days from symptom onset and 3 days after resolution of fever and improvement in symptoms. Persons who do require hospitalization should remain in isolation for 14 days.
- Inform persons who test positive for COVID-19 that they may be contacted by the health department to identify their close contacts for follow-up as a part of contact tracing and containment activities.

A growing number of facilities now offer testing services and providers should expect to see an increase in test requests as Philadelphia proceeds to the yellow phase. Providers should consider anyone who has participated in large gatherings as potentially exposed and offer testing as above.

PDPH will work with public health laboratories and local healthcare facilities to help facilitate increased access to testing services. Healthcare providers, infection prevention practitioners, and other partner agencies should report point of care or in-house rapid tests to PDPH electronically or by phone at 215-685-6741 (after hours: 215-686-4514). Laboratory-confirmed cases and clinically compatible cases with an exposure or positive serology result that are severe (hospitalization or death) or associated with a congregate setting or essential work should also be reported by telephone or fax at 215-238-6947 (form available at: [https://hip.phila.gov/Portals/default/HIP/EmergentHealthTopics/nCoV/PDPH\\_COVID19\\_ReportForm\\_Fillable\\_May2020.pdf](https://hip.phila.gov/Portals/default/HIP/EmergentHealthTopics/nCoV/PDPH_COVID19_ReportForm_Fillable_May2020.pdf)). When reporting, please include contact information for the case so that contact tracing can be performed (mobile phone and / or email address).

For additional information and updates about COVID-19, please see:

- **Public Health Recommendations for Community Exposure:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>
- **Criteria to Discontinue Quarantine or Isolation:** [https://hip.phila.gov/Portals/default/HIP/EmergentHealthTopics/nCoV/PDPH\\_StrategiesforEndingIsolation\\_05-08-2020.pdf](https://hip.phila.gov/Portals/default/HIP/EmergentHealthTopics/nCoV/PDPH_StrategiesforEndingIsolation_05-08-2020.pdf)
- **Surveillance:** <https://www.phila.gov/programs/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/testing-and-data/>
- **Guidance:** <https://hip.phila.gov/EmergentHealthTopics/2019-nCoV>