

# UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

## COVID-19 Update: Health Care Personnel Updates from CDC and DPH

Dear Members,

As we continue to receive updates from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we'd like to share this information with you in an effort to facilitate your response to the threat posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and address the many difficult problems facing each ALR. *Please note that these guidance documents were issued for Health Care Facilities and Health Care Personnel, but provide helpful information that can be used by assisted living residences (ALRs).*

The DPH Memorandum provides recommendations regarding HCP (health care personnel) contact tracing, monitoring, and work restrictions in selected circumstances. Please see below for a summary of the recommendations in the Memorandum that were provided a guidance on when an employee may continue to work after an exposure of COVID-19 and the monitoring required in such a situation.

Providers may consider allowing asymptomatic HCP who have had an **exposure** to COVID-19 to continue working after the following conditions have been met:

- All options to improve staffing detailed in your facility or organization's emergency management plan have been exhausted;
- The occupational health services program has been consulted;
- The health care facility has stopped all non-essential, elective invasive procedures, if applicable; and
- The health care facility has postponed any non-essential outpatient appointments, if applicable.

If these conditions are met and HCP are allowed to continue working, the health care facility or provider is required to:

- Ensure HCP report temperature and absence of symptoms prior to starting work each day;
- Ensure HCP don a *facemask for the entire time that they are at work for the 14 days after the exposure event*;
- Direct that if HCP develop even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must cease patient care activities and notify their supervisor or occupational health services prior to leaving work;
- *Prohibit HCP with even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19 from working while they are symptomatic and, in accordance with DPH guidelines, test for COVID-19, HCP must remain out of work while awaiting COVID-19 test results*;
- Using clinical judgment avoid having HCP care for high risk patient, including immune-compromised patients, for the 14 days after the exposure event; and
- Consider having HCP work shorter shifts (i.e. 8 hours) as there is early evidence that shorter shifts may be protective.

The DPH Memorandum was based on the more detailed guidance provided by the CDC.

- CDC HCP Personnel Exposure document may be found here:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

DPH strongly encourages all health care facilities and providers in Massachusetts to monitor the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for up-to-date information and resources:

- CMS website: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>

Additionally, please visit DPH's website that provides up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.

*Mass-ALA will continue to keep you informed on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Stay tuned for more updates*

*\*The information provided in this COVID 19 update is solely for general informational purposes to assist in understanding the evolving guidance regarding the current COVID 19 public health threat. It is not intended to be a primary public health or medical resource, but is provided as a clearinghouse for or compilation of various guidance issued by official and related sources.*

