

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MAY 2020

Dear Providers,

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an emerging illness. Many details about this disease are still unknown, such as treatment options, how the virus works, and the total impact of the illness. New information, obtained daily, will further inform the risk assessment, treatment options and next steps. We always rely on our provider partners to ensure the health of our members, and we want you to be aware of the tools available to help you identify the virus and care for your patients during this time of heightened concern.

Guidance:

- Know the warning signs of COVID-19. Patients with COVID-19 have reported mild to severe respiratory symptoms. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms include fatigue, sputum production, and muscle aches. Some individuals have also experienced gastrointestinal symptoms, such as diarrhea and nausea, prior to developing respiratory symptoms
- However, be aware that infected individuals can be contagious before symptoms arise. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure
- Instruct symptomatic patients to wear a surgical or isolation mask and promptly place the patient in a private room with the door closed
- Healthcare personnel encountering symptomatic patients should follow contact precautions, airborne with N95 precautions, and wear eye protection and other personal protective equipment
- Refer to the **CDC's criteria** for a patient under investigation for COVID-19. Notify local and/or state health departments in the event of a patient under investigation for COVID-19. Maintain a log of all health care personnel who provide care to a patient under investigation.
- Monitor and manage ill and exposed healthcare personnel
- Safely triage and manage patients with respiratory illness, including COVID-19. Explore alternatives to face-to-face triage and visits as possible, and manage mildly ill COVID-19 cases at home, if possible

Take Action:

1. Be alert for patients who meet the criteria for persons under investigation and know how to coordinate laboratory testing
2. Review your infection prevention and control policies and **CDC's recommendations** for healthcare facilities for COVID-19
3. Know how to report a potential COVID-19 case or exposure to facility infection control leads and public health officials. Contact your local and/or state health department to notify necessary health officials in the event of a person under investigation for COVID-19

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4. Refer to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **World Health Organization** for the most up-to-date recommendations about COVID-19, including signs and symptoms, diagnostic testing, and treatment information
5. Be familiar with the intended scope of available testing and recommendations from the **FDA**

This guidance is in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and may be retired at a future date.

Sincerely,

Meridian