



ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

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Commissioner

THOMAS E. SMITH, MD
Chief Medical Officer

MEMORANDUM

To: OMH PC Executive Directors, Clinical Directors, Medical Directors,
Chief Nursing Officers

From: Thomas Smith, MD, Chief Medical Officer
Daniel Silverman, MD, Bureau of Health Services

Date: March 25, 2020

Subject: Instructions for Testing Psychiatric Center Patients for COVID-19

OMH can use our Bioreference Lab at the Nathan Kline Institute for COVID-19 testing, effective immediately. The following inpatients should be considered for testing:

1. Inpatients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19:
 - a. Fever greater than 100 degrees.
 - b. New onset cough not known to be due to another cause.
 - c. Shortness of breath not known to be due to another cause.

For symptomatic inpatients, prioritization may be further considered for those at a higher risk for more severe symptoms, such as older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, and/or those with an immunocompromised state, that may put them at higher risk for more severe outcomes (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, receiving immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease).

2. Inpatients who have had close contact with a suspect or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient or who have a history of international [travel from affected geographic areas](#), or domestic areas of community-wide transmission, within 14-days of their symptom onset. Close contact can be defined as:
 - a. Being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (such as caring for or visiting the patient) or sitting within 6 feet of a patient in a healthcare waiting area or room; or
 - b. Having unprotected, direct contact, with infectious secretions or excretions of a person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on or touching used tissues with a bare hand).
3. Other patients, as deemed appropriate, following review with the Central Office Physician On-Call.

Prior to testing a patient for COVID-19, the Psychiatric Center attending physician or infection control staff member must obtain approval from the Central Office Bureau of Health Services or from the Central Office COVID-19 Physician on-call:

Day of Week	Name	Phone
Monday	Daniel Silverman, MD	518-275-2782 (cell) 518-439-3007
Tuesday	Grace Lee, MD	347-804-9758
Wednesday	Matt Erlich, MD	917-232-3349
Thursday	Claire Brandon, MD	646-581-0151
Friday	Matthew Perkins, MD	917-849-9590
Saturday	Thomas Smith, MD	917 763-8727
Sunday	Flavio Casoy, MD	646-483-2149

COVID-19 Testing Procedures

1. The COVID-19 test request should also include a respiratory panel with influenza.
2. Collecting diagnostic respiratory specimens (e.g., nasopharyngeal swab) is likely to induce cough or sneezing. Testing should be conducted outdoors if climate allows. If testing indoors, it should be completed in an isolated setting;
3. Only the healthcare provider and the individual being tested should be in the room when testing is performed;
4. Follow DOH guidelines for specimen collection;
5. Healthcare providers collecting specimens should wear recommended PPE, including a gown, gloves, eye protection, and facemask;
6. Hand hygiene should be performed before putting on, and after removing, PPE using alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol;
7. PPE should be put on outside of the room prior to entry. If testing outdoors, PPE should be put on more than 6 feet away from the patient;
8. Keep an external trash can with a bag and a lid outside the room, or more than 6 feet away from the patient if outdoors, for disposal of PPE; and
9. PPE should be removed outside of the room, or more than 6 feet away if outside, and placed in external trash can before departing location.

Questions should be directed to the OMH Central Office Bureau of Health Services at (518) 474-7720.

CC: OMH Executive Team
 OMH COVID-19 Communication Team
 OMH Central Office COVID-19 Physicians On-Call