Guidance for COVID-19 Diagnosed and/or Exposed Healthcare Personnel

Date: March 30, 2020

Public Health Message Type: ☐ Alert ☒ Advisory ☐ Update ☐ Information

Intended Audience: ☐ All public health partners ☒ Healthcare providers ☒ Infection preventionists ☒ Local health departments ☐ Schools/child-care centers ☐ ACOs ☐ Animal health professionals ☐ Other:

Key Points:

• SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is currently circulating in New Jersey and the surrounding areas with many healthcare workers and facilities being heavily impacted.

• When overburdened, healthcare facilities may consider having asymptomatic staff who were considered HIGH and MEDIUM risk exposures to COVID-19 continue to work while masked.

Immediate Action Items:

• Healthcare facilities should continue to assess the risk of exposed healthcare personnel to COVID-19 using the NJDOH Healthcare Personnel (HCP) Exposure to COVID-19 Case Risk Algorithm, which would include a 14-day furlough from work, while actively monitoring for symptoms.

• In facilities where staff attendance is strained by excessive callouts and furloughs, healthcare facilities may consider allowing asymptomatic HCP who have had a HIGH or MEDIUM risk exposure to a COVID-19 patient to continue to work provided the following:

  1. HCP should report temperature and absence of symptoms each day prior to starting work (at least every 12 hours while at work) for the 14-day period after their exposure.

     ▪ If HCP develop even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must cease patient care activities, don a facemask (if not already wearing), and notify their supervisor or occupational health services prior to leaving work.

  2. HCP wears a facemask while at work for the same 14-day period.

• Asymptomatic HCP who tested positive for COVID-19 should continue home isolation for 7 days after their first positive COVID-19 test AND have had no subsequent symptoms. Out of an abundance of caution they should follow masking guidance below.

• Symptomatic HCP who have tested positive for COVID-19 may return to work 7 days after symptoms first developed AND 72 hours (3 days) after fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications with a significant improvement in symptoms (whichever period is longer). HCP who have tested positive for COVID-19 shall be:

  1. Masked at work until symptoms have completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset/positive test (whichever is longer) and;

  2. Restricted from caring for severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset/positive test (whichever is longer).

Contact Information:

• Jason Mehr, Healthcare-associated Infections Coordinator or Rebecca Greeley, Infectious Disease Team Lead at haiar@doh.gov, (609) 826-5964

• The Communicable Disease Service at (609) 826-5964 during business hours
References and Resources:

- NJDOH COVID-19: Information for Healthcare Professionals
  - NJDOH Healthcare Personnel (HCP) Exposure to COVID-19 Case Risk Algorithm
  - Guidance for Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Patients Diagnosed with COVID-19