**March 16, 2020**

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**COVID-19 Clinical Planning**

**How are we managing all of the activities around COVID-19?**

We continue to operate in our Incident Command Structure under the leadership of Ravin Davidoff, CMO, and Nancy Gaden, CNO, and with participation from ambulatory and inpatient providers and staff. Command Center phone number: 617-414-6860 (operating 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily).

We are also in constant contact with local, state, and national public health officials and other hospitals and Boston University School of Medicine to ensure that we are coordinating efforts and sharing the most accurate, up-to-date information.

**What’s our current protocol for testing for COVID-19?**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) testing guidelines have been expanded. Testing for patients with fever and/or respiratory illness no longer requires prior approval by MA DPH. MA DPH guidance for testing MUST be followed:  [https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-pui-criteria/download](http://s2.bl-1.com/h/cNRxmVNj?url=https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-pui-criteria/download).

A brief summary of new testing criteria guidelines is:

* Hospitalized patient with fever and pneumonia/ARDS
* Healthcare worker/EMT with fever or signs/symptoms of respiratory illness
* Close contact to confirmed case or part of cluster in congregate setting (e.g., school)
* Close contact in home WITH fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory tract illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, pneumonia).
* Travel from Level 3 area WITH fever and lower respiratory tract symptoms
* Provider MUST confirm eligibility at [https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-pui-criteria/download](http://s2.bl-1.com/h/cNRxnbnl?url=https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-pui-criteria/download), which is confirmed within the Epic order panel

Currently the BMC clinical laboratory is sending most specimens to the ARUP reference lab which has changed their collection to **a single nasopharyngeal swab**. Testing for most persons with fever and/or respiratory illness will be sent twice dailyand performed at the ARUP reference lab.

The expected turnaround is at least 24 to 72 hours after receipt by the reference laboratory.

Results will be available in Epic, and as of March 16, there is a centralized nurse calling patients with COVID-19 results.

See the [Emergency Management section of the Hub](https://internal.bmc.org/doc/bmccovidtesting) or our external website at [https://www.bmc.org/covid-19-information-employees](http://s2.bl-1.com/h/cNRxmQzg?url=https://www.bmc.org/covid-19-information-employees) for the complete testing protocol.

**Where can I find up-to-date screening algorithms?**

Screening algorithms for all hospital areas are being posted on the [Emergency Management section of the Hub](https://internal.bmc.org/departments/emergency-management/covid-19-and-flu). They are also available off-campus on the [COVID-19 Information for Employees section of BMC.org](https://www.bmc.org/covid-19-information-employees/screening-and-testing).

Both pages will be updated as the algorithms change.

**What are the tents outside the hospital for?**

There are currently three tents outside the hospital – two near the Emergency Department and Shapiro, and one tent on the Menino side of campus.

A tent outside the ED is being used for testing of patients with potential COVID-19. The other tents have been set up in case we need more space for patients requiring screening and testing for COVID-19, or additional Emergency Department space.

**What is the Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Clinic?**

As a first step in the larger plan to support and manage the resources in our ED for the acutely ill, BMC has opened an Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Clinic in the Shapiro Lobby. The ILI clinic will not be advertised and is ONLY for our BMC patients needing non-emergency care, by referral from the ED and clinics.

Hours of the ILI Clinic are limited as we begin operations. We will be scaling up as part of our surge plan moving forward.

**Staff Support and Resources**

**Who do I contact if I have concerns about staff exposure?**

Employees should continue to send questions and requests to the Working Well Clinic’s dedicated email for COVID-19 related questions: [Covid19WWC@bmc.org](mailto:Covid19WWC@bmc.org). A [detailed flowchart](https://www.bmc.org/sites/default/files/documents/covid/COVID19%20Employee%20Exposure%20Response%20Flow%20Chart_V2.pdf) has been created by Working Well that outlines various exposure scenarios (updates will be sent as protocols change).

**What resources are available if I’m feeling anxious or overwhelmed by this situation?**

BMC is committed to providing wellbeing support for any employee experiencing anxiety as a result of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 outbreak. If you or your family need support, please reach out to one of the following resources.

Our [Employee Assistance Program](https://internal.bmc.org/doc/employee-assistance-program-flyer) is available for free, 24/7 confidential counseling to all employees and their families experiencing behavioral health issues such as stress and anxiety or substance useers. For more information, visit [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com/) and use Web ID: BMC. For counseling and referrals call: 833.306.0107

Beth Milaszewski, LICSW, the employee assistance clinician, is available to speak to individuals and teams and provide support related to stress management, anxiety, work conflicts, and traumatic events and situations. You can reach Beth at [Beth.Milaszewski@bmc.org](mailto:Beth.Milaszewski@bmc.org), 617-414-4357, or by paging 8010.

**Is there support for working remotely?**

Below are tools and tip sheets for working remotely. As expected, the ITS Service Desk is experiencing an extremely high call volume and is working to resolve user issues as quickly as possible. Additional staffing has been brought in given we anticipate increased user needs in the coming days.

* [Phone and Collaboration Tools](http://s2.bl-1.com/h/cNR5PBHt?url=https://www.bmc.org/sites/default/files/documents/covid/remote-work-readiness_phone-and-collaboration-tools_final.pdf)
* [Computer Use](http://s2.bl-1.com/h/cNR5PHhw?url=https://www.bmc.org/sites/default/files/documents/covid/Remote-Work-Readiness_computers_final.pdf)

**Campus Changes**

**What doors are open? How do I get into the hospital?**

In order to help keep our employees and patients safe and as healthy as possible, we’ve made changes to how everyone should access the hospital. We appreciate this is a big change and an inconvenience, but it is essential.

Changes for employees include:

* The Yawkey main entrance and Yawkey Mass Ave. entrance is closed to everyone.
* Employees who work in Menino, Yawkey, and Dowling must use the Menino building entrance to access the hospital.
* The ED entrance on Albany Street is closed to employees.
* ED employees should enter through the ambulance bay.
* The Moakley entrance is closed, except to employees who work in the building.
* The connection between the ED entrance and the Moakley lobby is closed to all traffic.
* Employees who work in Shapiro, Crosstown, Family Medicine, DOB, and other hospital buildings can continue to use their building entrances.
* Employees and physicians, please limit your travel throughout the buildings only to areas in which you have business.
* When leaving the hospital, employees should exit the same way they entered.

Changes for patients include:

* The Yawkey main entrance and Yawkey Mass Ave. entrance is closed to everyone.
* The Moakley entrance is limited to patients coming to the Hematology Oncology clinic or infusion center only.
* The Emergency Department (ED) entrance should be used only by patients presenting for care at the ED.
* Shapiro, Preston, Crosstown, Family Medicine, and DOB will be open only to patients with appointments in these buildings.
* All patients should continue to use the Menino entrance, unless otherwise noted above.

**What is the current visitor policy?**

A new visitor policy has been implemented to help keep patients and staff safe. The policy will be enforced by Guest Services and Public Safety, but please help us make sure patients are aware. The current policy is:

* People under 18 are not allowed to visit any patient.
* We are limiting visitors to one per patient at a time, in all areas of the hospital.
* We will not be allowing visitors into the PACU (post-anesthesia care unit).
* When entering the Menino lobby, visitors are being screened for upper respiratory infection symptoms including fever, sore throat, or cough. Any visitor with obvious signs of illness will be asked to leave.

**What changes have been made to cafeterias and other services on campus?**

The following changes will allow us to manage crowds on campus and help prevent the spread of illness. They are effective until further notice:

* The Menino Gift shop will be closed.
* No outside catering or food orders (such as pizza) are permitted. Please contact Food & Nutrition for your regular, internal catering needs.
* Yawkey Cafeteria and Shapiro Café are open – but access to Shapiro Café is only through 2nd floor.

**For employees who need to report to work at the hospital and usually take public transportation, are there other parking options?**

As of Monday, March 16, BMC employees who are not currently part of the parking program are temporarily able to park in 710 or DOB Garages at a rate of $8/day, which is the approximate daily cost of our parking program rates. Employees who are currently part of the parking program, should continue to use their assigned garages.

**Changes for Patients**

**Are patients still able to come for visits? What about elective surgeries?**

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and be prepared for a possible surge of patients, we are reducing elective surgeries, ambulatory visits and other elective procedures.

We have deliberate and thoughtful criteria in place to determine what surgeries, procedures, and visits can be safely delayed and are making sure there is a pathway for sick patients that need to be seen in our clinics.

Patients have been asked to call their provider if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and feel they need to be seen. This will help us triage patients who do need appointments, while reducing the potential spread of illness.

We are also leveraging telephonic visits wherever possible. All patients with appointments scheduled are being given the option to cancel or postpone their visit, switch to a telehealth visit, or come in only if the visit is essential.

**How do patients get seen by the Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Clinic?**

The ILI has been established to help support and manage the resources in our ED for the acutely ill. This clinic will not be advertised. If you have a patient with an influenza like illness and they do not need emergency care, they can be seen in the ILI Clinic only through a referral. The clinic is only for current BMC patients.