

COVID-19 Update

For more information, visit the Hub @ internal.bmc.org



Dear Colleagues,

On March 10, Governor Baker declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts due to the COVID-19 outbreak, giving the state more flexibility in how it responds. We will continue to update you on local, state, and national information as it changes, as well as send BMC updates.

Reminder: Please continue to wash your hands regularly and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (you can report empty hand sanitizer dispensers to 4-5183).

NEW: Visitors Policy

- 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).

NEW: Telework Support

- ITS is currently increasing the capacity of our system to support the need for increased telework and will be sending documentation and guidance by end of day tomorrow on how to connect remotely to computer and phone systems.
- Extra staff will be added to the Service Desk for assistance.
- ITS is also securing an additional phone conference service with increased capacity.

NEW: CDC Update and Process for PPE Conservation Policies

- Effective March 10, the CDC has updated their [recommendations](#) to allow facemasks as an acceptable alternative to N95 respirators.
 - Available respirators will be prioritized for procedures that are likely to generate respiratory aerosols.
 - Eye protection, gloves, and gowns are still recommended.
- Effective March 12 at 7 a.m., all N95 masks and yellow masks must be requested through Patient Transport. To order these items, please use Epic to select the nonpatient option and choose this equipment.
 - For any questions/concerns, please call Patient Transport at x4-5830 or pager 8726.
- As a reminder, BMC has implemented [policies to conserve personal protective equipment](#) (PPE), including N95 respirators, surgical masks, and precaution gowns.
 - This allows us to be strategic about how we use the available PPE now and during anticipated shortfalls.

- **Please take only the supplies you need** to protect yourself while providing direct patient care here at BMC. This is essential, as taking excess supplies will put staff and patients at risk.

NEW: Ambulatory Frequently Asked Questions

- A list of [frequently asked questions](#) related to Ambulatory clinics, such as screening, signage, appointments, and PPE, can be found on [the Hub](#) and externally on <https://www.bmc.org/covid-19-employees>.

HIPAA and Disclosure of Patient Information Reminders

- Federal and state laws about patient confidentiality ([click to view new COVID-19 guidance](#)) apply as normal during an infectious disease outbreak or other emergencies.
- The only fully allowable disclosures of protected health information are to public health authorities and to persons at risk of contracting or spreading a disease as necessary to prevent or control the spread.
- Please remember that no hospital staff person is authorized to speak to the media without authorization from the Media Relations team (pager 1068).