

## FAQs FOR MANAGING COVID RELATED ISSUES IN AN AMBULATORY SETTING

**Q: My patient is having symptoms and they have never been tested, or they are calling about close contact with someone who is COVID+, what do I do?**

**A:**

- Please call the patient back and use the document "[Screening and symptom management](#)" found on the [Hub](#)
  - If they meet criteria for testing, send the patient to ED or ILI. They will determine whether patient meets criteria for testing and will triage patient appropriately and refer to central COVID follow-up monitoring as appropriate
  - If they do NOT meet criteria for testing, but you think they would benefit from ongoing follow-up after your initial evaluation:
    - You can schedule the patient for follow-up within your clinic if appropriate
    - If BMC Employee, you can email Covid19WWC@bmc.org or 617-638-8400
    - OR you can refer into our BMC COVID Follow-up Monitoring program by messaging p BMC COVID Follow up Monitoring if they meet the following criteria:
      - COVID+ or highly suspect COVID
      - Have AT LEAST ONE risk factor (Age > 65, Chronic lung disease, CAD/CHF, Diabetes, HTN, immunocompromising condition, Obesity with BMI >= 40, ESRD or ESLD)
      - Are having ongoing moderate symptoms or mild but worsening symptoms

**Q: My patient is having symptoms and they are CONFIRMED COVID+ or they have tested negative but we have continued high suspicion for COVID what do I do?**

**A: Please note that even if a patient tests negative, given a test sensitivity ~70%, they may still have COVID**

- Please call (or have another member of your clinic call) the patient back and assess/triage the patient using "[Confirmed COVID-19 positive or presumed positive symptom assessment and triage](#)" found on the [Hub](#)
  - If they meet criteria for urgent evaluation, send to the ED (do not send to ILI)
  - If they do not meet criteria for urgent evaluation, but you think they would benefit from ongoing follow-up after your initial evaluation:
    - You can schedule the patient for follow-up within your clinic if appropriate
    - If BMC Employee, you can email Covid19WWC@bmc.org or 617-638-8400
    - OR you can refer into our BMC COVID Follow-up Monitoring program by messaging p BMC COVID Follow up Monitoring if they meet the following criteria:
      - Highly suspect COVID or COVID+
      - Have AT LEAST ONE risk factor (Age > 65, Chronic lung disease, CAD/CHF, Diabetes, HTN, immunocompromising condition, Obesity with BMI >= 40, ESRD or ESLD)
      - Are having ongoing moderate symptoms or mild but worsening symptoms
- If they are already followed by COVID Follow-up Monitoring Program (you will see encounters with notes titled COVID Follow-up Monitoring), you may forward these requests to the encounter provider to reach out to the patient. (Please do not forward new referrals without initial evaluation by a clinic provider 1<sup>st</sup>!)

**Q: My patient is calling about test results from BMC/ILI clinic, when can they expect results and who is responsible for contacting/disclosing?**

**A:** We have a central BMC Results Disclosure team that discloses results and provides patient counseling and education. The patient will get a MyChart message when the test is resulted and/or someone from that team will contact the patient within 24-48h of performing the test depending on the reason for testing (except Sat-Sun). If your patient is calling and still has not received results, you can forward the message to BMC COVID19 Results pool OR instruct patient to call the Results Disclosure team at 617-414-7831. You can encourage the patient to sign up for MyChart to see results as soon as they're available instead of waiting for a call- go to mychart.bmc.org or call (844)635-1390.

For your reference, the BMC Results Disclosure team uses the following guidance and smart phrases to counsel patients: [\*\*“COVID-19 Test Result Disclosure and Counseling”\*\*](#)

**Q: My patient is calling for an excuse from work note**

**A:** Patients who were tested at BMC are usually getting excuse from work notes from the central results disclosure team, ED or ILI. However, if you are contacted for an excuse from work note, you can provide the note using system templates. If you search in the communications navigator under “other” letter templates, you can find the following letter templates (see end of document for screenshot):

BMC COVID WORK LETTER EXCUSED FROM WORK (POSITIVE)  
BMC COVID WORK LETTER EXCUSED FROM WORK (CONTACT)

**Q: My patient is calling about isolation/quarantine clearance and return to work notes**

**A:** At this time, we are able to clear patients for return to work, however DPH is still performing contact tracing and clearance for return to community. (Note: these guidelines may change shortly)

- BMC employee: please refer to working well for clearance for return to work at BMC
- Other healthcare employee: should refer to their occupational health for clearance
- General population: please see [latest CDC guidelines](#) for the most up to date criteria

We have system letter templates that you may use for return to work purposes. If you search in the communications navigator under “other” letter templates, you can find the following letter templates:

BMC COVID WORK LETTER RETURN TO WORK (POSITIVE)  
BMC COVID WORK LETTER RETURN TO WORK (CONTACT)  
BMC COVID WORK LETTER RETURN TO WORK (Negative/No contact)

**Q: My patient is calling about retesting for isolation clearance**

**A:** Please refer to [“Removing COVID Precautions” on the Hub](#) for most up to date criteria for retesting. Based on CDC guidance, we recommend symptom-based clearance for removal of COVID-19 isolation precautions in **most patients, except those with specific immunocompromising conditions who may require retesting.**

- A certain subset of our patients (refer to document above), require 2 negative PCR tests ≥24h apart to clear isolation. There is a centralized BMC COVID Retesting team who handles the retesting process, follows results and informs patients of clearance.
  - Patients who are discharged from inpatient or actively followed by the central COVID Follow-up Monitoring team will automatically be evaluated for retesting needs and do not need additional referral
- If your patient meets retesting criteria, please refer patient by sending an In basket message to BMC COVID Retesting Pool to initiate process (see above document)
- Please do NOT send requests to this pool unless your patient meets retesting criteria
- What if my patient’s employer insists on retesting, but they do not meet our BMC criteria for retesting?
  - Inform patient to discuss with their occupational health for retesting through their work. We can certainly provide a work note for them off of the symptom-based clearance guidelines (see above)
  - They can also get retested at another testing site as found on DPH ([DPH website testing sites](#))
  - If still cannot resolve with the above, you can email your request to [jai.marathe@bmc.org](mailto:jai.marathe@bmc.org) for review

**Q: My patient would like to be tested somewhere not at BMC. What do I do?**

**A:** Patients can get tested at other testing sites as found on DPH ([DPH website testing sites](#)). Instructions are on the DPH website, but patients do require a referral from their provider.

Please note- if patients are tested elsewhere, their results may not flow into our system and they will NOT be contacted by the BMC Central Results disclosure team. Please instruct your patients to contact your office again once they receive external test results to inform you of their results.

**Q: My patient informed me that they have tested positive for COVID elsewhere, how can I enter their results?**

**A:** Please call the external lab to confirm the patient's test results. Then follow the [manual entry of external results tip sheet](#) to enter into Epic and trigger the banner. Of note, results for patients who are tested at one of our OCHIN or care everywhere sites will flow into epic automatically although there may be up to 2 weeks delay.

**Q: What do I do if one of my patients cannot isolate safely at home?**

**A:**

If patients are homeless OR are housing insecure, they may be referred to isolation facilities operated by MEMA. Information on isolation units, including eligibility criteria, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-recovery-sites>.

**Q: My patient is struggling with managing social determinants (such as food and transportation), are there any resources I can guide them to?**

**A:** There is a site that we can use or direct patients to use to search for resources: [www.massthrive.org](http://www.massthrive.org)

**Q: What are the centralized clinical BMC COVID Resources available and how can I refer patients?**

Team	Purpose	Referral process
<b>COVID Results Disclosure Team</b>	<p>Centralized BMC team that discloses results for all patients tested in ED/ILI/Pedi Clinic locations and provides guidance on isolation as well as excuse from work notes.</p> <p><u>All patients who are tested</u> at BMC ED/ILI will receive a MyChart message and/or call with results within 24-48h of test being performed (except Sat-Sun).</p>	If a patient was tested at BMC but has not received results for > 48h, can refer to Results Disclosure team at p BMC COVID19 Results or instruct patient to call 617-414-7831
<b>COVID Follow-up Monitoring Team</b>	<p>Centralized BMC team that provides <i>proactive</i> outreach to patients every 1-3 days to monitor symptoms, perform triage, and provide counseling for patients who have primary care at one of our BMC practices OR do not have established PCP</p> <p>Patients are enrolled in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All patients discharged from BMC inpatient receive at least 1 touch within 24h (Mon-Fri) if they meet COVID clinical criteria for a call, and may be monitored longer</li> <li>• Direct referral at time of results disclosure by central Results team</li> <li>• <b>Ambulatory clinics <i>after</i> initial assessment or triage</b> if meeting following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>COVID+/pending/highly suspected</b></li> <li>• <b>Have at least one risk factor</b></li> <li>• <b>Having ongoing moderate OR mild and worsening symptoms</b></li> <li>• Seen at a BMC primary care clinic (GIM, FM, Pedi, ID, Geri) OR have no established PCP</li> <li>• Are recuperating at home (not at a facility)</li> <li>• Are not a BMC employee (Working well owns)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>New referrals:</b> If a patient meets criteria, you can refer into the program by sending a staff message to BMC COVID Follow up Monitoring pool. New patient referrals <u>must</u> be evaluated by a provider first before referring to team.</p> <p><b>Patients actively followed by team:</b> if a patient reaches out to GIM with questions re: COVID, messages/calls can be forwarded to p BMC COVID Follow up Monitoring Pool</p> <p>Please do NOT send a message for patients with one-off questions or who are not actively followed by the team and/or do not meet criteria for proactive outreach.</p>
<b>COVID Retesting Team</b>	<p>Initiates and manages retesting process for clearance from isolation for those who meet guidelines for test-based clearance from isolation. Please see: following page for detailed guidelines and processes</p> <p>Of note: Patients who are discharged from IP and/or are actively followed by Follow-up Monitoring Team will automatically be transferred to COVID Retesting team when appropriate.</p>	<p>If a patient meets criteria, you can refer to initiate retesting by sending a staff message to BMC COVID Retesting pool. If they are a BMC employee, please refer to working well (see below)</p> <p>Please do NOT refer to team unless patient meets criteria! Of note- if employer requesting and patient does not meet our retesting guidelines, refer patient to their employer for retest</p>
<b>Working well</b>	Owns testing, results disclosure, questions and work clearance for BMC Employees	Email Covid19WWC@bmc.org or 617-638-8400

### How to pull in COVID work letter templates:

- 1) Enter your communications navigator
- 2) Ensure appropriate patient recipient is selected
- 3) Select “Other” button on the template screen (red box below)
- 4) Type in “BMC work COVID” and this should pull up all available system work letters

