

HOWARD COUNTY EMPLOYEE COVID-19 TESTING AND RETURNING TO WORK GUIDELINES

I. Definitions:

- a. **Suspected Patient-** A “Suspected Patient” is an employee who exhibits one or more of the following symptoms of COVID-19: (1) Low grade fever of 100.2 F or higher; (2) dry cough and difficulty breathing; (3) chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste, or sense of smell; or (4) any other symptom or combination of symptoms listed by the CDC.
- b. **Exposed Employee-** An “Exposed Employee” is someone who has had extended direct contact with a Suspected Patient or Confirmed Patient, which is defined as direct continuous contact at a distance of 6-feet or less for a continuous period of fifteen minutes or more when either individual was not wearing a mask.
- c. **Confirmed Patient-** A “Confirmed Patient” is defined as an employee who has actually received a positive test result for COVID-19.
- d. **Recovered Patient-** a “Recovered Patient” is defined as an employee who is previously tested positive for COVID-19.

II. Testing:

The Employee is responsible for making their own testing arrangements. The employee’s county insurance will pay for COVID-19 testing under the following three circumstances: (1) when an employee is a Suspected Patient; (2) when an employee needs confirmation that he or she is an Exposed Employee; or (3) when an employee needs confirmation that he or she is a Recovered Patient before returning to work. Employees who do not fall within one of these categories still remain at liberty to seek a COVID-19 test on their own pursuant to the terms and conditions of their health insurance coverage, but such testing will be billed to the patient according to the terms of their health insurance coverage.

Employees are encouraged to utilize any available drive-through or walk-up testing centers available in Howard County at the time when they need to be tested. Please contact Sharon Adams in the Howard County Treasures Office for the appropriate paperwork.

III. Workplace Response/Return to Work Guidelines for Suspected Patients, Confirmed Patients, or Exposed Employees:

Any employee who is a Suspected Patient or Confirmed Patient should be sent home immediately. All Suspected Patients should be tested as soon as possible, in accordance with the testing procedures in these Guidelines. Each employee testing positive or with symptoms of COVID-19 are encouraged to contact their primary

care physician or medical provider immediately, and seek medical treatment if necessary. Employees awaiting test results should not return to work before test results are returned. If an employee is a Suspected Patient, Exposed Employee, or Confirmed Patient, that Employee should be excluded from work until the earlier of (1) 14 days from the date of the onset of showing symptoms of the date of exposure; (2) the date on which the Suspected Patient or Exposed Employee is symptom free for at least 72 hours; (3) after receiving medical clearance from the employee's medical provider or (4) the date on which the employee obtains a test returns a negative test finding for COVID-19.

IV. **Employees who are NOT a Suspected Patient, Confirmed Patient, or an Exposed Employee:**

Employees who do not meet the definition of a Suspected Patient or Exposed Employee still remain at liberty to seek a COVID-19 test on their own pursuant to the terms and conditions of their health insurance coverage, but such testing will be billed to the patient according to the terms of their health insurance coverage. At the discretion of the County Judge or Emergency Management Coordinator, an employee who does not otherwise meet the definition of a Suspected Employee or Exposed Employee may still be authorized to receive free testing under these Guidelines; if special circumstances warrant, subject to testing availability. Special circumstances may exist if because of their employment with the County, the Employee has had non-extended contact, but is a person who is at a higher risk of exposure or within a known vulnerable population.