



## COVID-19 Health Care

Infection control procedures including administrative rules and engineering controls, environmental hygiene, correct work practices, and appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are all necessary to prevent infections from spreading during healthcare delivery. Prompt detection and effective triage and isolation of potentially infectious patients are essential to prevent unnecessary exposures among patients, healthcare personnel, and visitors at the facility. All healthcare facilities must ensure that their personnel are correctly trained and capable of implementing infection control procedures; individual healthcare personnel should ensure they understand and can adhere to infection control requirements.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Minimize Chance for Exposures

Ensure facility policies and practices are in place to minimize exposures to respiratory pathogens including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Measures should be implemented before patient arrival, upon arrival, and throughout the duration of the affected patient's presence in the healthcare setting.

#### Before Arrival

- When scheduling appointments, instruct patients and persons who accompany them to call ahead or inform HCP upon arrival if they have symptoms of any respiratory infection (e.g., cough, runny nose, fever) and to take appropriate preventive actions (e.g., wear a facemask upon entry to contain cough, follow triage procedures).
- If a patient is arriving via transport by emergency medical services (EMS), the driver should contact the receiving emergency department (ED) or healthcare facility and follow previously agreed upon local or regional transport protocols. This will allow the healthcare facility to prepare for receipt of the patient.

#### Upon Arrival and During the Visit

- Take steps to ensure all persons with symptoms of suspected COVID-19 or other respiratory infection (e.g., fever, cough) adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, hand hygiene, and triage procedures throughout the duration of the visit. Consider posting visual alerts (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance and in strategic places (e.g., waiting areas, elevators, cafeterias) to provide patients and HCP with instructions (in appropriate languages) about hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette. Instructions should include how to use facemasks (See definition of facemask in Appendix) or tissues to cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, to dispose of tissues and contaminated items in waste receptacles, and how and when to perform hand hygiene.



- Ensure that patients with symptoms of suspected COVID-19 or other respiratory infection (e.g., fever, cough) are not allowed to wait among other patients seeking care. Identify a separate, well-ventilated space that allows waiting patients to be separated by 6 or more feet, with easy access to respiratory hygiene supplies. In some settings, medically-stable patients might opt to wait in a personal vehicle or outside the healthcare facility where they can be contacted by mobile phone when it is their turn to be evaluated.

### **Establish Reporting within Healthcare Facilities and to Public Health Authorities**

- Implement mechanisms and policies that promptly alert key facility staff including infection control, healthcare epidemiology, facility leadership, occupational health, clinical laboratory, and frontline staff about known or suspected COVID-19 patients (i.e., PUI).
- Communicate and collaborate with public health authorities.
  - Promptly notify state or local public health authorities of patients with known or suspected COVID-19 (i.e., PUI). Facilities should designate specific persons within the healthcare facility who are responsible for communication with public health officials and dissemination of information to HCP.

