

Memo

TO: St. Joseph Medical Center Team
FROM: Tim O’Haver, VP, Chief Operating Officer
 Ruth Flint, VP, Chief Nursing Officer
 Dr. Kim Moore, VP, Medical Affairs, Associate CMO
DATE: October 22, 2020
RE: COVID-19 Safety Update at St. Joseph Medical Center and Staff Testing Requirement

The health and safety of our patients and staff are our highest priority and we have taken aggressive measures in line with the CDC and state guidance to prevent COVID-19 infections at St. Joseph Medical Center. In the spirit of transparency, we want to inform you about a situation that requires your attention.

Recently, two patients and one employee have tested positive for COVID-19 after previously testing negative. The patients were admitted to the 7th floor. We are working closely with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) to respond to this situation and will be testing all personnel and current patients who have visited the 7th floor since October 2 (the date two weeks prior to the first positive result). We are also reaching out with testing recommendations to patients who have been discharged from the unit since Oct. 2.

In addition, following TPCHD recommendations, we will be notifying and testing all health care workers who have provided care to the two patients who tested positive. Rapid tests are being deployed at the hospital to expedite results when possible. We continue to follow CDC exposure criteria and quarantine any staff member who meets these criteria.

Action Required: Mandatory Testing for SJMC Personnel, October 23, 24, 26

All employees who entered SJMC 7th floor on or after Oct. 2, 2020 are required to be tested for COVID-19. Employee Health will be conducting observed self-swab nasal collection for COVID-19 on the following dates:

Date	Time	Location
Friday, October 23	6 a.m. – 8 p.m.	Lagerquist A
Saturday, October 24	6 a.m. – 8 p.m.	Lagerquist A
Monday, October 26	6 a.m. – 8 p.m.	Lagerquist A

Employees will receive pay for time required for testing. Employee Health will contact employees with test results, which can take three to five days.

Exceptions:

- Employees who were tested outside of Employee Health on or after October 2nd are not required to be retested IF they provide a copy of the results to Employee Health.

We are also reaching out to close contacts and family members of the affected patients to inform them of the exposure and recommending testing. Together with TPCHD, we will evaluate test results and discuss next steps. Out of an abundance of caution, the 7th floor is closed to new admissions and visitation to the floor has been restricted. Some currently scheduled inpatient procedures may be postponed if it is medically safe to do so.

As COVID-19 cases are unfortunately on the rise in the community again, we recognize that health care facilities and providers are not immune to COVID-19. It is for these reasons we remind everyone that during the continuing pandemic, we must remain vigilant at all times to prevent infection and support each other in protecting our patients, staff and our families.

Please continue the following:

- **Stay home if you are sick.** Without exception, if you have any symptoms do not come to work:
 - Cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulty, fever 100.0 °F or greater, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
 - Contact your manager and also Employee Health immediately at 253-530-2288. Even if symptoms seem mild, don't ignore them or think it's just fatigue.
- **Closely follow universal masking and PPE requirements:**
 - Continue universal masking and use of eye protection with all patient care and additional PPE when required.
 - Every person, including visitors, must wear a mask at all times in our facilities. If you see someone who is not properly masked, speak up and help ensure compliance.
- **Maintain physical distance** of six feet from others, including while at lunch or during breaks.
- **Practice meticulous hand hygiene.** Wash hands frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds.

While out in the community:

- Keep a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household, both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- For additional safe practices, please visit the CDC [here](#).

Furthermore, out of an abundance of caution we will be putting the following safety measures in place within St. Joseph Medical Center:

- Restrict visitors, with very few exceptions, on the 7th floor.
- Wear face shields for additional protection.
- If face shields cannot be worn, then wear eye protection when in direct patient care.
- Using N95s/CAPRs **plus** eye protection for all Aerosolizing Generating Procedures (AGPs).
- Discard all masks at the end of the day, including N95 masks.
- Discard all previously worn masks and get a new mask every day.
- Remind team to clean eye protection between each patient room.
- Remind team to replace filter when CAPR light indicates need to change.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your director, manager or supervisor. Thank you!

More information

[COVID-19 Intranet Information Center](#) (requires network access)