

Emerson Hospital Covid-19 Recovery Phase 1 – Screening Policy

TITLE: Screening Policy – Covid 19 Recovery Phase 1

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 05/21/20

I. Statement of Policy:

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has issued guidance for how acute care hospitals can begin in-person provision of a limited number of additional, necessary services and procedures without jeopardizing health system capacity or the public health standards that are essential to protecting health care workers, patients, families, and the general public. This guidance does not apply to emergency care, which has been ongoing and will continue without limitation.

This guidance requires that hospitals must have a process for screening patients and companions for symptoms of or known exposure to COVID-19 prior to entering the facility. Hospitals must also have policies and procedures for screening patients in advance of a service or procedure, including policies and procedures to facilitate the testing of patients for COVID-19 when medically appropriate as well as for determining whether a procedure should go forward if a patient tests positive.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all inpatient and ambulatory care areas of Emerson Hospital.

III. Policy

A. Patients and approved visitors/companions will be screened for symptoms of, or known exposure to COVID-19 prior to entering the facility, according to Emerson’s existing COVID-19 policies (Emerson Hospital Testing Guidelines; and Infection Control Guidance for Patients with Suspected Viral Respiratory Illness including Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 Policies: Emergency Department, Inpatient, Peri-Procedural and Ambulatory and Emerson Hospital Testing Guidelines). These policies provide specific guidance, by area, for screening of patients in advance of a service or procedure, testing of patients when medically appropriate, isolation and patient placement, and appropriate personal protective equipment to be used.

B. Symptom screening includes identification of the following signs or symptoms possibly consistent with a viral respiratory syndrome.

- Fever, subjective or documented
- New sore throat
- New cough
- New runny nose or nasal congestion
- New muscle aches
- New shortness of breath
- New anosmia

C. COVID-19 Exposure is defined as: *Close contact with a COVID Confirmed person. Close contact defined as living with, caring for a COVID-19 Confirmed case, or being less than 6 feet from a COVID-19 Confirmed case for at least 10 minutes without masks. Additionally, having direct contact with the secretions of a COVID-19 confirmed case (such as being coughed on)*

while not wearing PPE would be considered close contact (see Emerson Exposure and Contact Tracing policy),

- D. All patients and visitors will be provided with a surgical or procedural mask upon arrival to the facility and will be instructed to wear the mask for the duration of their visit, as long as it is not soiled or damaged. A replacement mask will be provided if the mask becomes soiled or damaged.
- For inpatients the mask should be worn whenever health care personnel are in the room (as tolerated). The mask must also be worn anytime the patient is outside their room (i.e., during transport).
 - For outpatients, the mask should be worn throughout their visit to the Emerson facility except when removal is necessary for clinical care (See Emerson Universal Masking Policy).
- E. Testing of patients when medically appropriate will be completed according to the current Emerson Hospital's Testing Guidelines.

IV. References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (March 2020). Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities: Preparing for Community Transmission of COVID-19 in the United States. Accessed March 23, 2020 at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/guidance-hcf.html>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Guidance (May 18, 2020). Reopen Approach for Acute Care Hospitals.

Key Words: Covid-19, Screening
Policy Owner: