

COVID-19 EOHHS Guidance for Recovering Patients and Clients (developed: 5/12/20)

Overview:

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide recommendations for the care of persons who are confirmed to be infected with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and are now recovering within a Department of Public Health, Department of Mental Health or Soldier's Home inpatient facility.

Definition of a Person in COVID-19 Recovery:

- For symptomatic persons diagnosed with COVID-19 illness, recovery is defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications with progressive improvement and resolution of other symptoms.¹ A symptomatic person would only be considered in COVID-19 recovery after
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared (illness onset). Onset date (of symptoms) would be considered "day zero." **AND**
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery
- Recovery for asymptomatic persons diagnosed with COVID-19 illness would occur after isolation should be maintained for at least 10 days since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. If the person develops any symptoms, then they would follow the symptomatic criteria described above.
- Where there is concern that immunocompromised persons (e.g., medical treatment with immunosuppressive drugs, bone marrow or solid organ transplant recipients, inherited immunodeficiency, poorly controlled HIV) may continue to shed virus after recovery, a test-based strategy is recommended².
 - The test-based strategy requires two negative PCR-based tests at least 24 hours apart, collected after resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and improvement in respiratory symptoms. Utilization of the test-based strategy is contingent on the availability of ample testing supplies and laboratory capacity as well as convenient access to testing.

Space for Persons in COVID-19 Recovery:

- Persons who are in COVID-19 recovery and are patients or clients in a DPH or DMH facility, whether they were symptomatic or not, may transition from the COVID-19 positive dedicated space no sooner than 14 days since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, or illness onset and at least 3 days (72 hours) after recovery. The additional time between a person being defined as a person in COVID-19 recovery and transitioning from the COVID-19 dedicated space is out of an abundance of caution to ensure that the person is no longer infectious.
- If possible, the preference is that the person in COVID-19 recovery transition to a dedicated recovery space where they can continue to restore their health through gentle but focused, nutritional and physical rehabilitation.
- If transitioning the person in COVID-19 recovery to a dedicated recovery space is not possible, then the person can return to care area where persons not known to be infected with COVID-19 reside and if necessary may room with others.
 - Persons in COVID-19 recovery should not be cohorted in a room with another person who is immunocompromised.

¹ The following symptoms would count as COVID-19 symptoms for the purposes of defining symptom onset date: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficult breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ending-isolation.html>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Required for Staff and Persons in COVID-19 Recovery:

- Staff are no longer required to use full PPE (eye protection, gown, gloves and facemask) when caring for persons in COVID-19 recovery once they have transitioned out of the COVID-19 positive dedicated space.
- Staff should continue to wear a facemask at all times in accordance with facility policy.
- Staff and persons in COVID-19 recovery should continue to socially distance, as able.
- Staff should continue to practice hand hygiene before or after an interaction with the person.
- Staff should select appropriate PPE for the care being provided. As an example, staff should wear gloves if there is any risk of exposure to body fluids such as when perform a blood glucose check.
- Persons in COVID-19 recovery should wear a facemask or cloth covering when they are outside of their rooms. While they are no longer considered infectious, the period of immunity following COVID-19 diagnosis is unknown at this time.

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- Persons who are in COVID-19 recovery and have transitioned from the COVID-19 positive dedicated space should practice social distancing and maintain six feet from other persons, as able.
- Persons who are in COVID-19 recovery and have transitioned from the COVID-19 positive dedicated space may access outdoor spaces, as individual facility policy permits.

References:

Symptom-Based Strategy to Discontinue Isolation for Persons with COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html>