



TO: All Caregivers

FROM: Hans Cassagnol, MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Clinical Officer & Chief Physician Executive

DATE: April 11, 2020

RE: Guidance for COVID-19 Negative Person Under Investigation

In instances when COVID-19 testing is negative, but clinical suspicion remains high for COVID-19 infection, providers should not discontinue isolation without considering the possibility of a false negative test. Like all lab tests, the value of a negative or positive value must be interpreted in the context of clinical presentation and disease prevalence within the population.

In the setting of high COVID-19 community prevalence, the following combination of findings are commonly seen with COVID-19:

- New onset cough OR dyspnea OR Hypoxia
- PLUS Temperature >100
- PLUS normal WBC
- PLUS abnormal chest imaging (typically patchy infiltrates/opacities)

This constellation of findings, absent another alternative diagnosis, may prompt additional investigation for COVID-19. Additional data that may lend support to a presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis include:

- Procalcitonin <0.5
- Lymphocyte Count <1
- Chest CT with patchy ground glass changes
- Repeat COVID-19 testing with a positive result
- History of known exposure to an individual with COVID-19
- Infectious Disease Consultation with opinion stating probable COVID-19 despite negative test

Patients with a presumptive clinical diagnosis of COVID-19 may remain in a restricted isolation ward (except St. Joseph's) but may not be cohorted in the same room as a confirmed case except in exceptional circumstances under the direction of Infection Control.

If a clear alternative diagnosis subsequently emerges arguing against COVID-19, then isolation may be discontinued.

If there is disagreement regarding discontinuation of isolation status for a suspected COVID-19 patient please contact your site's infection control department for additional guidance.

Acute Care Infection Control Contacts:

- Mercy Hospital: Tara Graham 481-4729
- Kenmore Mercy/Mount S. Mary's: 220-1110
- Sisters of Charity: Michelle Inglut: 462-7644

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