



October 16, 2020

TO: Catholic Health Medical Staff

FROM: Hans Cassagnol, MD, MMM, Chief Physician Executive

RE: *COVID-19 Testing*

The cold and flu season pose additional challenges for our community response to SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) as we see increasing volumes of patients with acute respiratory illnesses presenting to our emergency departments. Adherence to the principles of masking and social distancing will undoubtedly help reduce cases of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. Nevertheless, we continue to plan and prepare for a renewed wave of cases in our region as we move into the colder months and people spend more time together indoors.

In addition to upholding the messages of masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene, we ask that providers educate patients on when to utilize emergency medical services when dealing with respiratory infection symptoms.

Patients exhibiting mild symptoms should be directed for COVID-19 testing through one of the several community resources available. A searchable map of test sites in Erie County is located at: erie.gov/covidtestsites. The site locations are subject to change; most require an appointment and patients are encouraged to call ahead.

- ECDOH diagnostic test sites require appointments and can be scheduled by calling (716) 858-2929.
- The NYSDOH listing of test sites can be found at coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you. The Erie County NYSDOH test site is located at the KeyBank Center (drive-thru or walk-up) 125 Perry St., Buffalo. Appointments are required by calling (888) 364-3065.

Patients experiencing severe symptoms should be directed to the nearest Catholic Health emergency department. *All* Catholic Health emergency departments are prepared to perform rapid COVID testing and admit patients to the appropriate facility for their diagnosis. This includes Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, The Mercy Ambulatory Care Center, Mount St. Mary's Hospital, and Sisters of Charity Hospital (Main Street and St. Joseph Campuses).



Patients should seek urgent medical care if experiencing:

<u>In children</u>	<u>In adults</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fast breathing or trouble breathing• Bluish lips or face• Ribs pulling in with each breath• Chest pain• Severe muscle pain (child refuses to walk)• Dehydration (no urine for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying)• Not alert or interacting when awake• Seizures• Fever above 104°F• In children less than 12 weeks, any fever• Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen• Worsening of chronic medical conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath• Persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen• Persistent dizziness, confusion, inability to arouse• Seizures• Not urinating• Severe muscle pain• Severe weakness or unsteadiness• Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen• Worsening of chronic medical conditions

All individuals with signs and symptoms of acute respiratory infection should be instructed to self-isolate during their illness. Individuals who receive a positive test result for COVID-19 and individuals who are considered “high risk” based on exposures or symptoms (if testing was not performed) should also be instructed to self-isolate.