



UC Health
1111 Broadway, Suite 1400
Oakland, CA 94607
Phone: (510) 987-0147
<http://www.ucop.edu>

March 26, 2020

TO: Vice Chancellors for Health Sciences
Chief Executive Officers
Health Professional School Deans

Dear Colleagues:

Throughout UC hospitals, clinics and health centers, our employees are rising to the challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Your safety remains our paramount priority while we meet the needs of our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both testing for COVID-19 and personal protective equipment (PPE) are important for the protection of our patients and health care workers (HCW). UC Health has adopted procedures to provide a safe clinical environment during the pandemic. Procedures adopted at all UC clinical facilities include, but are not limited to:

- High compliance screening to identify and mask symptomatic patients;
- Strong messaging for HCWs with influenza-like illness to not work or be sent home;
- Non-airborne PPE when caring for patients with contagious respiratory illness;
- Use of respirators for aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs) on patients with contagious respiratory illness, including COVID-19; and,
- Self-monitoring for symptoms by employees if there is close contact with known COVID+ individuals in the community, or PPE breach during care of COVID+ patients

Importantly, all of the health centers across UC Health are now able to provide priority onsite testing. **We are making real progress increasing our testing volume.** As capacity increases and turn-around times reduce, we intend to broaden testing access based on appropriate clinical criteria.

UC Leadership continues to consult with the expert infection prevention providers across the system to guide our recommendations for personal protective equipment and other measures to limit the spread of the virus. **Recognizing that the virus is most often transmitted through droplets generated by coughs and sneezes and contact with contaminated surfaces, our experts have recommended using standard, droplet with eye protection precautions, and gowns and gloves as needed, when caring for all patients who may have the SARS-CoV-2 virus.** These experts recommend reserving airborne precautions and associated PPE for procedures that result in aerosolization of the virus when the provider is closer than 6 feet from the patient. These recommendations are aligned with guidance from the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and are unanimously supported by our infection prevention and healthcare epidemiology programs, infectious diseases experts, occupational health physicians, and our chief medical and nursing officers.

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Although scientific data are limited for the utility of universal masking, UC Health has identified appropriate circumstances where HCW or support staff within clinical areas may don all-day regular masks, ensuring that a single regular mask is used until it is wet, soiled, damaged, or otherwise does not fit:

- Asymptomatic workers in clinical areas currently or recently exposed to a close contact (e.g. household contact) exhibiting contagious respiratory symptoms;
- Those who have been exposed to a known COVID-19 case without wearing appropriate PPE; or,
- Those who may be at higher risk for severe COVID-19 disease or those living at home with individuals who are :
 - 65 years of age and over;
 - pregnant; or,
 - immunocompromised or have other serious chronic illness.

The above lists are not meant to be exhaustive. Local circumstances may warrant additional exceptions. It is the responsibility of all our staff and faculty to continue to preserve our mask supply for appropriate use.

We know that all of you are dedicated to serving our patients and communities, and we are grateful for your daily acts and innovative approaches. As situations evolve, we will continue to issue updates.

Sincerely,



Carrie L. Byington, MD
Executive Vice President
UC Health

CLB/rn

cc: President Napolitano
Chancellors
UCOP Management Response Team