

COVID-19 Associates with Possible Respiratory Illnesses or Symptoms Protocol

Updated: June 16, 2020

Bon Secours Mercy Health supports our caregivers who safely continue work to serve our communities in this time of need. We will continue to perform thermometer screenings for all associates, visitors, patients, affiliate providers, contractors and vendors. And we ask all associates to continue self-monitoring for symptoms prior to beginning shifts and throughout shifts, or before coming into facilities.

The associate protocol provides clarity to our associates for when to come to work and when to stay home and sets expectations for self-reporting exposures in other work they may perform.

What are we doing to protect associates?

Temperature scanning. All associates, vendors, affiliate providers and contractors will be required to go through the scanning process when you report to your work location, prior to beginning your shift.

If you are running a fever (greater than or equal to 100F), you will be asked to go home and not report to work for the next day. Refer to the [Symptomatic Associate SOP workflow](#) for additional information. Symptomatic associates must be negative for COVID-19 prior to returning to work. Associate Health will refer you to a provider to order testing, as appropriate. You may also choose to visit your primary care provider (PCP).

Self-monitoring of symptoms

If you have symptoms, contact the Nurse Access Line at 877-692-7780 and select option 8. The nurse will give you a recommendation of whether work is advised:

- Fever equal to or greater than 100 or
- Cough or
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing or
- Muscle pain or
- Headache or
- New loss of taste or smell or
- Chills/repeated shaking with chills or
- Sore throat
- [Click here for additional information](#)

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Do not self-diagnose and call off from work due to either symptoms or high-risk factors. Associates who are experiencing symptoms should follow these guidelines:

- **Associates with symptoms.** If you have symptoms, you should contact the Nurse Access Line at 877-692-7780 and select option 8. The nurse will give you a recommendation of whether work is advised. If you have **mild symptoms**, such as symptoms consistent with allergies (please remember it is allergy season), you may be cleared to come to work.
- If you have **severe symptoms**, such as a high fever, the nurse may ask you to not come to work and may refer you to a virtual visit with a provider, if appropriate. You will not be able to return to work without negative COVID-19 test results if symptomatic.

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- Follow your regular call-off procedures (for example, contact your manager or staffing office to advise that you are symptomatic and that you will not be reporting to work).
- If the Nurse Access Line recommends that you not work, your manager will receive an email indicating you are symptomatic and cannot report to work. You will not receive an attendance occurrence for not reporting to work (if you have the above symptoms). This will reduce the spread of possible illness. Managers, if concerned about patterns of absence, may address it with you.
- If you are still symptomatic 4 days later and cannot work, apply for a medical leave of absence: log on to [HR ServiceNow](#), download and complete the [Leave of Absence \(LOA\) application](#). Attach and submit the application through the [Leave Intake](#) form on the HR ServiceNow portal. If you have questions or need assistance, call Associate Services at 877-692-7780 and listen for the options to reach Integrated Absence.

How do I return to work?

If the decision is made for you to stay home due to symptoms, you will need to receive a COVID-19 test that indicates negative for the virus, as well as improvement in symptoms. You will also need clearance from your physician (Primary Care Physician, Occupational Health, etc.) to return to work. Your [Associate Health Nurse](#) will be able to assist you.

What if I have been traveling to high-risk areas?

Traveling associates

- International business-related travel is not permitted.
- Domestic *business-related travel* is only for essential business needs that must be completed in person and requires Market Leadership and/or ELC approval.
- If you *travel for leisure* internationally, you will need to complete the [BSMH Travel Questionnaire](#) (enter code **4ne3**). International travel will require 14-days away from our facilities following your return. If your role permits and your supervisor agrees, you may work remotely during that time. If you feel symptomatic, refer to “What do I do if I have symptoms?” above.
- If you *travel for leisure within the United States*, you will not need to complete the travel questionnaire, but you will need to remain masked while working in the facility upon return.

Associates exposed to COVID-19 through external work

- If you are exposed to, or are being tested for, COVID-19 at another employer, you should contact your [Associate Health Nurse](#).
- Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to self-quarantine for 14 days from your last exposure.

How will I be paid if I am out of work?

If you are out of work due to respiratory illness, you will follow applicable policies for absence from work due to a personal illness. This includes use of PTO and applying for short-term disability.

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Reassignment or redeployment

- If you are unable to work for any reason, we may ask you to work in another capacity within the ministry. Some of the roles may be in an alternate location.
- Redeployment will be based on ministry need and available alternatives. Alternate work may not be available.

* Providers and those on who are eligible for ATO will be handled under a separate policy and with different terms.

** The Associate Care Management team is an additional resource who can provide confidential assistance and education to associates and family members who are at risk for complications due to COVID-19, especially for those over 60 years of age and have a chronic condition, such as heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease. If feel you would benefit from this service, contact Associate Care Management via email at assoccaremgmt@mercy.com. You can find more information be on the [CDC website](#).