

**DBHDS State Facility Updated COVID-19 Admission Guidelines (Effective date: 3/27/24)**

COVID-19 testing for new admissions will no longer be required unless indicated by the responses to the screening questions below. New admissions must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and recent exposures prior to admission. If the individual refuses screening, facilities should follow the process for a doc-to-doc discussion to assess COVID-19 risk.

- Admission COVID-19 screening should include the following questions:
  - Is the patient currently (within past 72 hours) experiencing any of the following symptoms?
    - Fever > 100.0°
    - Chills
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Fatigue
    - Muscle or body aches
    - Headache
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat
    - Congestion or runny nose
    - Nausea or vomiting
    - Diarrhea
  - Has the patient had direct contact with a person confirmed or suspected to be positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days?
  - Is the patient currently recovering from CONFIRMED COVID-19 illness? (Include the first day of the onset of symptoms or date of the first day the individual tested positive for COVID-19)
  - Is the patient aged 65 years old or older?
- All patients aged 65 years old and older **require** testing for COVID-19 prior to admission.
- If the symptom/exposure screening is **NEGATIVE**, new admissions should be admitted to any available warm unit and **do not require testing for COVID-19**.
- Any **POSITIVE** response to the above screening questions **requires** testing for COVID-19. Evaluation for other respiratory viruses or infections should be considered such as (but not limited to) Influenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), or Streptococcal Infections.
- **Individuals who are confirmed COVID-19 positive prior to admission can be admitted at Day 5 of infection OR when there is documented two negative tests 24-48 hours apart, whichever is sooner, AND**
  - Asymptomatic; or
  - If symptomatic, at least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
  - Day Zero means the day of symptom onset (which may be prior to obtaining a test) or the date of the first positive test.
- For the safety of other patients and staff, new admissions who are within 10 days since their first positive test, should not participate in milieu and other group activities. All treatment interventions should be provided in the patient's room to the greatest extent possible.

State facilities should continue to provide up to date information to Central Office as requested weekly in the facility COVID tracker located here: [Facility COVID tracker](#)

If there are 2 or more related cases of an infectious disease, state facilities should notify Angela Harvell, Deputy Commissioner for Facility Services, Suzanne Mayo, Assistant Commissioner for Facility Services, and Dr. Alexis Ablasca, Chief Clinical Officer, within 24 hours, and include any recommendations provided by the health department, if applicable. Any changes to admissions practices require approval by the Central Office.