



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

GALE R. BURSTEIN, MD, MPH, FAAP
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HEALTH ALERT PRIORITY #355 UPDATED

May 6, 2020

COMMISSIONER'S STANDING ORDER DIRECTIVE FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COLLECT SPECIMENS FOR COVID-19 TESTING IN ERIE COUNTY

Please distribute to All Hospitals, Emergency Departments, Urgent Care Facilities, Community Medical Providers, Long Term Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Group Homes, Laboratories, and other medical professionals collecting COVID-19 specimens.

SUMMARY

There have been additional updates made to the documents originally distributed/posted on April 13, 2020 and revised on April 20, 2020 regarding the directives for Medical Professionals and individuals who collect specimens for COVID-19 testing in Erie County:

- Updated: COVID-19 Packet List of Documents to include additional documents #6 and #13
 - NYSDOH – Guidance for Nursing Home Employees returning to work following COVID-19
- Updated: “Standing Orders Face Page” clarifies that order applies to recipient as follows:
 - If *symptomatic*: from time of testing until negative results or criteria for release have been met.
 - If *asymptomatic*: from receipt of positive test results until criteria for release have been met.
- “HD-Coronavirus Standing Order Isolation 5/5/2020”: clarifies that order applies to recipient as follows:
 - If *symptomatic*: from time of testing until negative results or criteria for release have been met.
 - If *asymptomatic*: from receipt of positive test results until criteria for release have been met.
- NEW: NYSDOH Guidance for Nursing Home Employees returning to work following COVID-19 Infection
 - New – 4/19/20
 - Requires that asymptomatic employees remain out of work until **14** days from first positive test date
 - Requires that symptomatic employees remain out of work until 14 days after onset of symptoms, provided at least 72 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms are improving.
- Updated: Return to Work Authorization for Health Care Workers or Essential Employees Other Than Nursing Home Employees: adds “*Other than Nursing Home Employees*”
- NEW: Return to Work Authorization for Nursing Home Employees

DIRECTIVE

This Standing Order directs any person who is tested for COVID-19 to isolate themselves:

- If *symptomatic*: from time of testing until negative results or criteria for release have been met.
- If *asymptomatic*: from receipt of positive test results until criteria for release have been met.

It also contains the following directives for medical professionals and individuals who collect specimens for COVID-19 testing:

- 1) Any doctor, hospital, or other medical provider or facility operating within the County of Erie must provide a copy of the Standing Order to any person who has tested positive for COVID-19 at the same time as the provider or facility is providing the results of the positive test or, in lieu of providing the order, shall inform the person of the order and direct them to the Health Department's website for a copy www.erie.gov/covid19. The provider or facility must maintain documentation of compliance with this provision.
- 2) Every doctor, hospital, or other medical provider or facility operating within the County of Erie must conspicuously place a copy of this Standing Order in their place of business, where it may be viewed by any persons seeking treatment or testing. The Standing Order must also be posted on the web site home page of each doctor, hospital, or other medical provider or facility operating within the County of Erie.
- 3) Any person who collects a specimen from an individual for the purpose of COVID-19 testing must provide such individual with a copy of the Standing Order or direct them to the following website www.erie.gov/covid19 and verify the individual's telephone number, address, race, and ethnicity to include in the laboratory requisition.

It is critical that our medical community assist in preventing the spread and transmission of this highly infectious disease. As such, the Erie County Department of Health encourages you to take additional steps to ensure that your patients are aware of their obligation to isolate if they are infected with COVID-19, such as posting the Commissioner's Order on your website home page and explaining the mandate to isolate at the time of testing.

This Standing Order incorporates New York State Department of Health guidance relating to the release of persons from isolation. Under that guidance, which is attached to the Standing Order, individuals can self-release from isolation under the following circumstances:

If the individual experienced any of the following symptoms: Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing, the Clearance Criteria are:

- At least 7 days have passed since onset of symptoms; AND
- They have been afebrile for at least 3 days, without taking fever-reducing medication; AND
- Any shortness of breath/coughing/difficulty breathing has improved.

If the individual has not experienced any of those symptoms, the Clearance Criteria are:

- At least 7 days since they first tested positive for COVID-19; AND
- They have not developed any subsequent illness

If the individual is a Health Care Provider (*other than a Nursing Home employee*) or Essential Personnel, I have attached additional guidelines regarding returning to work.

Please also refer to the specific guidelines for Nursing Home employees.

I have also included a FAQ that you should distribute to your patients regarding isolation and release.

Only NEW and UPDATED documents have been attached to this alert. For the complete packet please visit: www.erie.gov/covid19

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact the Erie County of Department of Health, Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance during normal business hours at (716) 858-7697.

The ECDOH Health Alert & Advisory System is an e-mail notification system designed to alert community partners about important health related information. You can sign up to receive alerts & advisories at <https://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=health-alerts-advisories>

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary

The Erie County Department of Health does not provide medical advice. The information provided on the Erie County Department of Health website is not an attempt to practice medicine and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is for informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of your personal physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or issue. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of the content found on the Erie County Department of Health website or this correspondence.