



London N. Breed
Mayor

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

Tomás Aragón, MD, DrPH
Health Officer

March 26, 2020

To: All ZSFG, Laguna Honda, Health at Home and Whole Person Integrated Care Shelter Health and Urgent Care Staff:

Because staff safety and wellness are chief concerns and because we now know that people without symptoms sometimes pass the coronavirus to others, we have new masking guidelines for patients and for staff in high-risk areas. These guidelines reflect several realities in facing the challenges of fighting the spread of COVID-19, including the necessity of managing a limited supply of PPE and the knowledge that the virus can be passed from staff-to-staff as well as from patients-to-staff.

The new guidance is as follows:

1. This guidance section affects areas where patients with COVID-19 are known to be entering the healthcare system, where patients and staff are in close proximity to each other for more than 15 minutes at a time, where patients are difficult to screen for symptoms, and where patients are particularly vulnerable. Upon entry to these clinical areas, all patients and visitors will be given and asked to wear an isolation (ear loop) mask:
 - a. Respiratory testing sites
 - b. Emergency Department (ED)
 - c. Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES)
 - d. Urgent Care at ZSFG
 - e. Whole Person Integrated Care Shelter Health and Urgent Care
 - f. Ward 17 (Dialysis)

2. In the following clinical areas, staff will wear an isolation mask at all times when in clinical areas and when in close contact with other staff members. (When providing clinical care for patients with COVID-19/being tested for COVID-19, staff will wear recommended PPE, rather than an isolation mask):
 - a. Emergency Department (ED)
 - b. Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES)
 - c. Labor and Delivery
 - d. Urgent Care at ZSFG
 - e. Urgent Care at Tom Waddell
 - f. Ward 17 (Dialysis)
 - g. Positive Health (WD 86 – HIV)
 - h. Hematology/Oncology
 - i. 4A skilled nursing facility
 - j. Laguna Honda Hospital Building
 - k. Health at Home (for direct patient care greater than 15 minutes)

Perform hand hygiene—washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer – before AND after touching face or isolation mask.

Isolation masks can be worn until wet or soiled and should not be worn longer than one work day.

Many staff members are concerned about transmission of COVID-19, both at work and in the community. Due to these concerns, staff have been wearing masks in areas of the workplace and under circumstances where they are not specifically recommended by infection control policies. Some of these masks are brought in from home.

3. Staff will not be asked to remove masks, as long as they are consistent with the following guidelines, which are important for continued staff and patient safety:
 - a. Masks must have a clean appearance.
 - b. Masks which have been worn for providing direct patient care cannot be worn in non-patient care areas. This includes masks which have been worn in the operating room and other procedural areas.
 - c. Masks cannot be taken from supplies that are used for patient care. Please be attentive to this: staff providing care for patients with concern for infection must have access to personal protective equipment.
4. Gloves should not be worn outside patient care areas, except under specific circumstances outlined in hospital and departmental policies.
5. All PPE must be discarded in appropriate trash receptacles.

Note: This guidance is in addition to previously issued guidance on staff PPE used when caring for patients with COVID-19, with tests pending for COVID-19, and under evaluation for COVID-19, and recommendations for extended use of N95 masks and eye protection in areas where patients with COVID-19 and patients being tested for COVID-19 are cohorted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tomás Aragón". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Tomás Aragón, MD, DrPH
Health Officer, City & County of San Francisco
San Francisco Department of Public Health