

April 29: COVID-19 Clinical Update

Testing Site Update, PPE Support for Post-Acute Care and Impact of COVID-19 on Seniors

This daily communication is intended to facilitate the sharing of important clinical information during the COVID-19 healthcare crisis and to help respond to questions from physicians across Northwestern Medicine.

Below is a clarification regarding the alternate testing sites and testing criteria that appeared in Monday's Clinical Update.

Also in today's issue, learn about how NM is supporting post-acute care facilities by distributing PPE and read a Q&A with Geriatric Medicine Physician Lee Lindquist, MD, about the impact of COVID-19 on seniors.

ALTERNATE TESTING SITES

As of today, we are live with expanded SARS-CoV-2 testing at all seven of our alternate testing sites. Testing will be available across NM for individuals who meet the NM Testing Criteria on [Physician Forum](#) and [NMI](#).

To get tested, patients and employees must have an order. At this time, rather than placing an order in Epic directly, physicians should send an In Basket message to the covidnursingtriage pool or refer the patient directly to the NM COVID-19 Hotline at **312.47COVID**.

NM Testing Locations

Hospital	Location Details	Address
Central DuPage Hospital	ILI Quick Care Area inside ED entrance	25 N. Winfield Rd., Winfield
Delnor Hospital	Drive-through tent in the Family Medicine Residency Clinic parking lot entrance (Employees should use ED extension)	298 North Randall Road, Geneva
Huntley Hospital	ED	10400 Haligus Road, Huntley
Kishwaukee Hospital	ILI tent outside the ED	1 Kish Hospital Drive, DeKalb
Lake Forest Hospital	ED (South Entrance)	1000 Westmoreland Road, Lake Forest
McHenry Hospital	ED	4201 Medical Center Drive, McHenry
Northwestern Memorial Hospital	Lavin Family Pavilion Drive – Erie Entrance	259 East Erie Street, Chicago

(Employees should use REC via Ontario Entrance)

Testing locations, hours, criteria and tip sheets are available on [Physician Forum](#) and [NMI](#).

PPE SUPPORT FOR POST-ACUTE PARTNERS

To address ongoing shortages of PPE among our post-acute care providers, NM has implemented a temporary, needs-based PPE distribution program to support patients who are discharged to a skilled nursing or custodial care facility. This program will run until Friday, May 8. This program supplements existing PPE distribution by local public health departments.

See the [PPE tip sheet](#) for details and email postacutenetwork@nm.org if you have questions.

COVID-19 AND OLDER PATIENTS

Why are seniors particularly vulnerable to COVID-19?

Adults over age 65 are at higher risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19 because immune systems weaken with age.

How do COVID-19 symptoms for seniors differ from those experienced by younger people?

It has been very difficult to diagnose COVID-19 in older adults. They often do not meet criteria to be tested because they may present a different set of symptoms, such as lethargy, generalized weakness, dehydration, hypotension, syncope, falls or confusion.

Older adults usually have lower body temperatures — “Old is cold,” as the saying goes — so they may not have fevers, and lack a cough due to impaired cough reflexes. Patients with dementia or cognitive impairment may not be able to communicate their symptoms.

How is NM providing support to seniors as patients?

Getting an accurate picture of COVID-19 infections among older adults from the community and those living in residential communities has been challenging. We plan to adjust the NM testing algorithm to accommodate varying symptoms of seniors so they can be tested.

What is NM doing to guide care in long-term care facilities?

If you are contacted by an older adult or caretaker of a patient living in a long-term care center or skilled nursing facility who has vague symptoms or changes in their normal state, add COVID-19 to the top of their differential diagnosis.

There are more than 305 long-term care facilities in Illinois with COVID-19 positive residents, many with multiple cases at each facility. Although Illinois has mandated that skilled nursing facilities accept hospital discharges regardless of COVID-19 status, NM does not plan to ask our local COVID-19-naïve SNFs to accept COVID-19 patients.

Also, NM is providing PPE to physicians who see patients and has also helped several facilities obtain much-needed testing materials. It is NM’s goal to protect our seniors from the spread of COVID-19.

What advice do you have for physicians and family members caring for seniors?

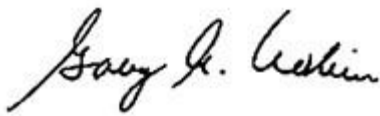
Aging-in-place has taken on a new meaning. We are seeing increases in falls, fractures and depression. It is important that older adults stay home but also vital that we encourage them to exercise. Walking in hallways or around kitchen tables, or doing repeated stand/sits in front of their chair are good ways to stay active. It is also essential for seniors to stay socially engaged (while maintaining appropriate physical distance) to stimulate their minds and improve mental health.

Finally, we need to recognize the brave and dedicated NM clinicians who care for patients who live in skilled nursing facilities. We know it is a tough time for everyone, and even more so for this vulnerable population. You are their heroes.

Michelle Obama Extends Heartfelt Thank You

In a recently recorded message, the former First Lady recognizes healthcare workers on the front lines in Chicago who dedicate their lives to helping others during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Listen Now](#).

Thank you for your extraordinary dedication and collaboration in providing exceptional care to our patients and supporting one another during this unprecedented crisis. If you have questions or would like to share the story of an NM hero, please email us at covid-19md@nm.org.



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