

# COVID-19 Update

## December 10: Vaccine Availability and Distribution, Monoclonal Antibody Treatment Updates, New CDC Quarantine Guidelines, Testing Updates

*Today's issue features new information about vaccine availability and distribution to the Northwestern Medicine workforce, as well as updates regarding monoclonal antibody treatment, a new outpatient testing facility in the North Region and new options for patient testing. It also includes new guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for those who have been exposed to COVID-19.*

### VACCINE UPDATE

#### Vaccination for NM physicians and other healthcare workers

Earlier today, you received a communication from Northwestern Memorial HealthCare President and CEO Dean Harrison about COVID-19 vaccine availability for the NM workforce. As detailed in that communication, the health system is expected to receive an initial supply of vaccine next week, and healthcare personnel have been prioritized to receive some of the first doses. For additional information on how the vaccine will be distributed and to complete the enrollment form, please visit the [Vaccine and Treatment Resources page on Physician Forum](#) or the [Vaccine and Treatment Resources page on NM Interactive](#) (login required).

#### Patient vaccination

After healthcare workers, as well as residents of long-term care facilities, the next group to be offered the vaccine will be essential workers, followed by older adults and those with medical conditions that put them at high risk of serious COVID-19 illness. Together, these groups represent 70 to 100 million people in the U.S. While vaccine production is expected to improve over time, it may be spring or summer before the general population will have an opportunity to get vaccinated.

At this time, NM is not scheduling any patients for vaccination. Several resources are available to help you communicate with patients:

- A new dot phrase [.covidvaccinequestions](#) is now available in Epic.
- For questions about vaccine availability at NM, please direct patients to the [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) on nm.org.
- For general questions about COVID-19 vaccines, direct patients to the [Vaccines page on the CDC website](#).

We will continue to work with state and local officials to adjust our vaccination response as needed. For additional information about government planning efforts and frequently asked questions, visit the [Vaccines page on the CDC website](#). For up-to-date information about vaccine availability and distribution at NM, continue to visit the [Vaccine and Treatment Resources page on Physician Forum](#) or the [Vaccine and Treatment Resources page on NM Interactive](#) (login required).

### **MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY TREATMENT UPDATE**

Please continue to place a disposition referral order for monoclonal antibody (mAb) therapy for outpatients with mild to moderate symptoms who are at high risk for complications with COVID-19, as per the [Monoclonal Antibody FAQ](#) document. The [BLAZE 1 Study](#) demonstrated that mAb therapy can reduce hospitalization from 10% to 2% in appropriately selected patients.

Across NM, numerous patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 have already benefited from mAb administration. The Epic order has been designed to help busy physicians and clinicians ensure that only appropriate high-risk patients will receive mAb therapy within the required time frame, specifically within 10 days of symptom onset and five days of a positive COVID-19 result noted in Epic.

To help expedite scheduling for patients you are referring for mAb infusion, please indicate a preferred location and/or date for infusion within the comments section of the referral if you or the patient has a preference. By providing this information, the scheduling team will be able to coordinate more effectively with the patient, which will limit the need for rescheduling.

For more information about mAb therapy, please visit the [Vaccine and Treatment Resources page on Physician Forum](#) or the [Vaccine and Treatment Resources page on NMI](#) (login required).

### **TESTING UPDATES**

#### **New testing site in Lake Forest**

On December 7, NM opened a new COVID-19 testing site at the Immediate Care Center in Lake Forest, 600 North Westmoreland Road. Testing hours are 8 am to 4 pm daily (closed on holidays). Patients should follow the signs to the drive-up locations, stay in their car upon arrival and then call to register.

Please remember that an order from an NM physician is required for all COVID-19 tests. Patients are encouraged to contact their NM physician or to schedule a telehealth visit at an NM Immediate Care Center to determine if a COVID-19 test is needed.

For testing site locations and hours, please view the [Alternative Testing Site Locations](#) document.

#### **New options for patient testing**

Patients who have an established Northwestern Medical Group or Regional Medical Group primary care physician or advanced practice provider have two new options for getting tested for COVID-19:

- They can call their primary care physician's scheduling number. They will be connected to the Patient Service Center, and a representative will use ordering protocols to determine

if a COVID-19 test is indicated. If a test is needed, the Patient Service Center will order the test, schedule a telehealth visit and provide the patient with additional instructions.

- MyNM, powered by MyChart, will include a COVID-19 section under the Health tab, as well as in the Quick Links bar, where patients can follow similar ordering protocol questions to determine if they should be tested. If they meet the requirements, they will have the ability to obtain an order via MyNM and schedule a telehealth visit. For information about providing virtual care, please view the [Telehealth Resources page on Physician Forum](#) or the [Telehealth Resources page on NMI](#) (login required).

For additional information about testing, visit the [Testing Resources page on Physician Forum](#) and the [Testing Resources page on NMI](#) (login required).

### NEW QUARANTINE GUIDELINES

On December 2, the CDC released updated guidance on the length of quarantine for individuals who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19. This does not change recommendations for isolation of those individuals diagnosed with COVID-19. There are two options for a shorter quarantine:

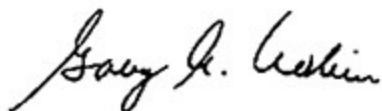
- Quarantine can be discontinued after day 7 from the last close contact with a confirmed case if the individual has remained asymptomatic and obtains a negative viral test (molecular or antigen) no earlier than 48 hours before quarantine discontinuation (day 5 or later). Quarantine cannot be discontinued until day 7, even if test results are available prior to that day. Antibody test results cannot be used to discontinue quarantine.
- Quarantine can be discontinued without a viral test after 10 days from the last close contact with a confirmed case if the individual has remained asymptomatic.

This updated guidance is based on local epidemiology and does require accepting some risk of transmission with the possible benefit of improved quarantine compliance. The initial 14-day quarantine recommendation was based on the upper bounds of COVID-19 incubation period (range two to 14 days post-exposure). The new guidelines do not apply to those living in congregate settings. People who have been exposed to COVID-19 must still adhere to physical distancing and masking, and should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms through day 14 post-exposure.

For more information about quarantine guidelines, please visit the [When to Quarantine page](#) on the CDC website.

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Thank you to all NM physicians and clinicians for your continued commitment and leadership in providing safe, high-quality, *Patients First* care.



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