

Health Advisory

Updates to Vaccination and Masking Requirements for Healthcare Workers October 5, 2022

SUMMARY POINTS

- Masking continues to be required in patient care and patient-facing areas; masking is not required in non-patient facing areas. All Healthcare Workers in any location must continue to mask upon returning to work after an exposure or isolation per CDC guidance.
- Screening testing of unvaccinated asymptomatic healthcare personnel, is at the discretion of the healthcare facility. Individuals who are symptomatic and those who have had high risk exposures should continue to be tested, regardless of vaccination status.

The City of Philadelphia and PDPH recently updated guidance for City employees and healthcare workers based on the current status of COVID-19 activity in the City. The Centers for Disease Control also issued updated guidance for healthcare workers and healthcare facilities. PDPH will no longer require universal masking in non-patient facing areas of healthcare facilities or asymptomatic screening of unvaccinated healthcare workers. These recommendations may change in the future.

1. Masking

- a. All healthcare institutions must continue to enforce masking for all with at least a surgical mask in all patient-facing areas and for all patient-facing services regardless of vaccination status.¹
 - i. Masking is not required for Covered Healthcare Workers when present in non-patient facing areas.
 - ii. All staff in any location must continue to mask upon returning to work after an exposure or infection per CDC guidance.

2. Asymptomatic screening testing for unvaccinated healthcare workers

- a. Healthcare Institutions are no longer required to perform asymptomatic screening testing of exempt individuals.
- b. Healthcare Institutions must test symptomatic individuals and those with a high-risk exposure. Those who have tested positive in the past must test again if symptoms develop at any time after previous infection.
 - i. Please refer to the CDC guidance on managing COVID-19 exposures in Covered Healthcare Workers, including testing recommendations, at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>.
 - ii. If positive, the individual must isolate. Read the CDC's guidance on work restriction for healthcare workers at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>.

3. Specific Settings

- a. Skilled Nursing Facilities are required to follow Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidelines for vaccination, testing, and isolation, however, Skilled Nursing Facilities are required to follow the City of Philadelphia guidance on masking, as outlined in this document, in all patient-facing areas.

¹Unvaccinated individuals who are patient-facing or who meet the definition of a Covered Healthcare Worker and who are employees of or contractors with the City of Philadelphia are required to must double mask or wear an N-95 or similar respirator while working per the September 27, 2022 Updated COVID-19 Safety Protocols for City Employees.