



Date: March 27th, 2020

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Testing Prioritization**

Dear Valued Medical Providers:

I am writing to you today to ask for your support in assuring that test requests from your office for COVID -19 testing submitted to any of the Steward Hospital COVID-19 Outpatient Testing facilities are in accord with the Steward Health Care **Testing Priority** algorithm noted below. We have updated our priority list based on the newly reported CDC guidelines (attached) to ensure we have adequate supply of test collection kits for our patients and healthcare workers. We would greatly appreciate your support in this action and only order tests for those persons who meet the criteria under items 1 to 3. Asymptomatic patients have the lowest priority and we hope that you will discourage testing at this time.

Testing Priorities:

1. System will prioritize **HOSPITALIZED** patients and **HCWs who are ill** first.

Then, regarding the Ambulatory Care setting, testing priorities continue as follows:

2. Individuals with fevers and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory tract illness who also:
 - are elderly¹
 - have underlying chronic health conditions²
 - are HCWs or First Responders
 - are residents of Long-Term Care facility
3. As resources allow, additional suspect individuals³ with symptoms in a community of rapidly increasing hospital cases, in order to decrease community, spread and ensure health of essential workers, testing should be prioritized as follows:
 - Test Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms
 - Test HCW and First Responders with symptoms
 - Test Individuals w/mild symptoms in communities experiencing high COVID-19 hospitalizations.
 - Individuals who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms
 - Consider testing individuals exposed to clusters of acute respiratory illnesses in congregate settings like long term facilities, prisons or shelters where



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more than 3 individuals have fevers and signs /symptoms of a lower respiratory illness present with cough, SOB, pneumonia and there is no indication that a viral infection is causing the symptoms like influenza or RSV.

Patients who are completely asymptomatic remain a Non-priority.

Definitions:

¹Elderly- anyone above 65-year-old

² Comorbid Conditions: Diabetes, COPD, Asthma, Immunocompromised, Malignancy, Chemotherapy, Chronic Lung Disease, End Stage Renal Disease

³ People who have been **exposed to confirmed symptomatic patients with COVID-19** , people who have come from areas of **high transmission in the US** within prior 14 days, people who have come from areas of **Level 2 or 3 transmission** internationally within prior 14 days

AND

Have Fever and respiratory syndrome.

Thank you very much for your support and your continued efforts in addressing this international pandemic.

Sincerely,

Joseph Weinstein, MD, Chief Medical Officer
Steward Health Care, LLC



COVID-19 Symptoms: Fever, Cough, and Shortness of Breath

PRIORITY 1

Ensures optimal care options for all hospitalized patients, lessen the risk of healthcare-associated infections, and maintain the integrity of the U.S. healthcare system

- Hospitalized patients
- Healthcare facility workers with symptoms

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PRIORITY 2

Ensures those at highest risk of complication of infection are rapidly identified and appropriately triaged

- Patients in long-term care facilities with symptoms
- Patients 65 years of age and older with symptoms
- Patients with underlying conditions with symptoms
- First responders with symptoms

PRIORITY 3

As resources allow, test individuals in the surrounding community of rapidly increasing hospital cases to decrease community spread, and ensure health of essential workers

- Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms
- Individuals who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms
- Healthcare facility workers and first responders
- Individuals with mild symptoms in communities experiencing high numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations

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**NON-
PRIORITY**

NON-PRIORITY

- Individuals without symptoms