December 4, 2020

MEDICAL ADVISORY: UPDATE #18 – CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) REVISED QUARANTINE PERIOD FOR CLOSE CONTACTS OF A COVID-19 CASE

- DECREASE QUARANTINE FOR ASYMPTOMATIC CLOSE CONTACTS FROM 14 TO 10 DAYS BASED ON LATEST CDC GUIDANCE
- CLOSE CONTACTS SHOULD CONTINUE SELF-MONITORING FOR SYMPTOMS AND ADHERE TO ALL RECOMMENDED MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR THE FULL 14 DAYS
- 14 DAY QUARANTINE REMAINS IN PLACE FOR RESIDENTIAL CONGREGATE SETTINGS*

Dear Healthcare Provider:

On December 2, 2020, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published several shorter alternatives to the present 14 day quarantine period for close contacts of persons with COVID-19 infection. The establishment of quarantine periods for jurisdictions is made by each state’s public health authority.

- The previous recommendation for a 14-day quarantine was based on estimates of the upper bounds of the COVID-19 incubation period and maximally reduces risk of transmission.
- Evidence that persons can transmit SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) before symptoms develop established quarantine as a critical measure to control transmission.
- However, a 14-day quarantine may affect physical and mental health, as well as cause economic hardship that may reduce compliance.
- Reducing the length of quarantine may increase community compliance.
- CDC recognizes that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reducing personal burden against a small possibility of increasing the spread of virus.

Based on a review of CDC’s publication of a shortened quarantine period, the Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) has revised the quarantine period for close contacts of a COVID-19 case, when those contacts do not reside in a congregate setting,* from 14 days to **10 days, ONLY if the following criteria are met:**

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• No clinical evidence of COVID-19 has been elicited by daily symptom monitoring during the quarantine period, up to the time quarantine is discontinued;
• Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness for a full 14 days after their last date of exposure;
• Close contacts who develop symptoms within 14 days of their last exposure should be tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate while awaiting results; AND
• Close contacts are informed to strictly adhere to all recommended mitigation strategies, including:
  o Correct and consistent mask use
  o Physical distancing
  o Hand and cough hygiene
  o Avoiding crowds
  o Environmental cleaning and disinfection
  o Ensuring adequate indoor ventilation

*Congregate settings include: Long-term care facilities, group care homes, assisted living facilities, correctional facilities, shelters, residential rehabilitation and treatment settings, military recruit housing, etc.

With this strategy, residual post-quarantine transmission risk is estimated to be about 1% with an upper limit of about 10%. CDC and HDOH will continue to closely monitor the evolving science for information that would warrant a reconsideration of recommended options.

Note: This advisory does not modify any travel quarantine proclamations related to the COVID-19 Emergency.

Note: HDOH is not adopting the 7-day test-out alternative at this time.

We appreciate your continued support in identifying cases of COVID-19 and preventing the further spread of disease in our communities.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kemble, MD
Acting State Epidemiologist

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COVID-19 is considered an URGENT CATEGORY NOTIFIABLE CONDITION; providers are required to report any persons with COVID-19 positive test results and those strongly suspected to have COVID-19, to prevent the further spread of disease in our communities. If you have any questions or need to report a patient with confirmed/suspected COVID-19 or suspected MIS-C, please contact us at one of the numbers below.

Oahu (Disease Reporting Line) .....................(808) 586-4586
Maui District Health Office .........................(808) 984-8213
Kauai District Health Office .........................(808) 241-3563
Big Island District Health Office (Hilo) ............(808) 933-0912
Big Island District Health Office (Kona) ..........(808) 322-4877
After hours on Oahu .....................................(808) 600-3625
After hours on neighbor islands ....................(800) 360-2575 (toll free)

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