

FAQ: Employee COVID-19 Testing Program

Q: Why are we starting a COVID-19 employee testing program?

As we return to more regular services at UConn Health, we want to ensure employee and patient safety. Part of this strategy is assessing the prevalence of the SARS-CoV2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in asymptomatic employees. We are currently only aware of the infection rate among employees who have presented with virus symptoms or had a specific exposure incident. Also, this employee testing program aligns with both state reopening guidelines and sound principles for managing the pandemic risk as we continue to ramp up our outpatient practices and return to providing regular services.

Q: Who is being tested?

We are taking a phased approach to our COVID-19 employee testing. We will begin with a point prevalence sampling of approximately 900 or 33% of our approximately 2,700 clinical workers, including those who work in the hospital or outpatient care settings, including dental. The individuals in the Phase I sample group will be chosen randomly.

Q: Who is included in the group of approximately 2,700 clinical workers from which the randomly selected sample size is chosen?

Based on guidance received from the State and UConn Health Infection Control, those included in the Phase I sampling are employees from across departments at UConn Health who spend greater than 10 minutes within 6 feet of patients; have prolonged/regular contact with blood or body fluids; or work with high risk individuals.

Q: How do employees actually get the test done?

Employees who have been randomly selected to participate in the Phase I testing group are receiving emails with instructions about how to proceed. An employee must [sign up for MyChart](#) to be able to schedule his or her test.

Q: Will testing be expanded to all employees?

Based on the prevalence of positive results and other data we obtain in Phase I, we will determine next steps, which may include testing additional employees, providing repeated surveillance testing, or focusing testing on certain areas.

Q: How will I be tested?

Phase I initial employee screenings for COVID-19 will be conducted by obtaining a clinical sample via nasopharyngeal swab for SARS-CoV2 RNA PCR testing. The dedicated employee testing location is the sampling tent outside of the Emergency Department.

Q: What if I test positive?

Should you test positive for the virus, our COVID-19 Call Center will promptly contact you to assess any health care needs and will provide guidance on next steps regarding work activities. The Call Center also will send a secured email notification to Human Resources and your manager. Epic will safeguard the confidentiality of this information. Asymptomatic employees with a positive test will be notified by the COVID-19 Call Center to follow standard

policy and quarantine at home for the required 10 days. Such employees will qualify for COVID-19 Sick Leave or given a telecommuting assignment as appropriate.

Q: What if I prefer not to be tested?

Participation in the Phase I sampling is voluntary, not mandatory. However, participation is strongly encouraged, as it will help our organization determine the prevalence of COVID-19 among our employees. Understanding the prevalence rates both throughout the organization and within specific areas will provide important data to help inform our ongoing safety strategy and protocols.

Q: The communication from Dr. Agwunobi stated that a future phase may include mandatory testing; under what conditions would UConn Health require mandatory employee testing in Phase II?

At this time, we do not anticipate mandatory testing of asymptomatic employees. However, two potential scenarios that could lead to mandatory testing include: (1) an external mandate or recommendation to test health care employees from the State of Connecticut, the state's Department of Public Health, or another governing body; or (2) ongoing transmission or even an outbreak of the virus within one area of the facility that can't be mitigated with other interventions. However, both of these scenarios at this point in time seem unlikely. Currently, there is only an executive order by the Governor mandating weekly COVID-19 testing for staff across nursing homes, senior housing, and assisted-living centers. This mandated testing began in June.

Q: Will I have to be tested again in the future?

Our current prevalence assessment for COVID-19 at this time is a one-time baseline PCR test for the random sample size of Phase I asymptomatic employee groups. Should our testing strategy change or the testing frequency needs to be adjusted, we will communicate updates to the UConn Health community.

Q: What if I have questions or concerns about testing, or if I am not sure if I am a Phase I selected participant?

If you have any questions, please contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 860-679-3199, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.