BALTIMORE CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

COVID-19 Provider Updates

December 18, 2020

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COVID-19 Vaccines

1. NEW UPDATE: The FDA granted Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine for use in individuals 16 years and older. The Advisory Committee on

Immunization released guidance for the vaccine on December 13, 2020. The full recommendation can be found here.

2. NEW UPDATE: CDC has published Clinical Considerations for Use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. More details can be found here.

3. NEW UPDATE: Clinicians and the general public should report adverse events experienced after COVID-19 vaccination to the CDC Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) or call 1-800-822-7967.

4. NEW UPDATE: Individuals who have received COVID-19 vaccine can enroll in V-SAFE, a smart-phone based tool that uses text messaging for personalized health check-ins after you receive the COVID-19 vaccine. More information can be found here.

5. NEW UPDATE: December 14, 2020 – CDC: What Every Clinician Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety

6. NEW UPDATE: Post Vaccine Considerations for Healthcare Personnel. CDC has released guidance regarding management of new-onset systemic post-vaccination signs and symptoms that could overlap with COVID-19 symptoms and strategies to minimize the impact on healthcare staffing.

State of Emergency

1. Maryland continues in a State of Emergency to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Baltimore City's most recent restrictions went into effect on December 10, 2020 to included: limiting **indoor gatherings to 10 individuals** (25 individuals for outdoor gatherings), limit facilities to **25% maximum occupancy** (including retail, religious, and other attractions), and **restaurants are closed for indoor and outdoor dining**. View the Baltimore City Executive Order Phase 1 Restrictions.

2. NEW UPDATE: As of December 17, 2020, the Maryland Department of Health released new guidance. More details can be found at Amended Directive and Order regarding various Healthcare Matters. This document includes updates on Maryland's travel restrictions.

3. Baltimore City requires that masks are worn in all outdoor spaces, regardless of social distancing.

Recovery and Isolation

1. The CDC has **updated the definition of a close contact** to someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person with COVID-19 for a **cumulative total of 15 minutes,** including resulting from brief exposures that ultimately add up to 15 minutes within a 24-hour period.

2. NEW UPDATE: The CDC provided guidance on individuals who have had a close contact but could be eligible for a **shortened quarantine time**. Please click here for more info.

3. NEW UPDATE: Maryland infusion centers are available to administer the FDA EUA-granted monoclonal antibody treatments. Treatment should be given within 10 days of symptom onset to high risk patients who have a positive direct SARS-CoV-2 test. Place a referral treatment with

this form. More information from Maryland Department of Health about monoclonal antibody treatments can be found here.

4. Baltimore Convention Center Field Hospital is a well-equipped setting for patients who require extra support as they convalesce from COVID-19. See here to find out if this option should be used for your patients who are medically complicated and vulnerable if recovering at home unmonitored, but not ill enough to require acute hospital care.

Testing and Reporting

1. Neighborhood testing sites are available at various locations in the Baltimore City. These sites are walk-in and no appointments required. Mobile sites have limited daily supplies of tests, and some site hours are conditional on the weather. Weekly schedules can be found here, along with details on other Baltimore City testing sites. Baltimore Convention Center also offers free walk-in or by appointment COVID-19 testing for all persons regardless of insurance status or whether or not they have symptoms. Free parking and language interpreters available. No provider order is needed.

2. As we enter the flu season, it is more important than ever to encourage patients to get their flu vaccine. While it does not prevent COVID-19, the flu may cause severe illness which can further overwhelm our healthcare system struggling to manage the pandemic. Please read more here.

3. The CDC's Diagnostic Multiplex Assay is a single test that can diagnose infection caused by one of three viruses: SARS-CoV-2, influenza A, and influenza B. It is used by public health laboratories and is not given to clinicians, hospitals, or healthcare professionals directly. The CDC is working with states to allocate multiplex kits to their local public health laboratories.

4. *REMINDER* **Please inform your patients who are positive for COVID-19 that the health department will be calling them** to conduct contact tracing. When the phone rings, the caller ID will read **"MD COVID" (240-466-4488)**. The health department will never ask for your patient's social security number, financial information, or their immigration status.

Seen previously

1. Everyone tested at BCHD mobile sites will receive their results via a phone call from the BCHD call team. At that point, they can request a pdf copy of the laboratory result via email, or a paper copy mailed to their address. Depending on the laboratory used for testing, people tested through BCHD will receive paper instructions on how/when to create an account via online lab portal (e.g. Cian, Lab Corp). The instructions for online lab portal creation can also be sent via the BCHD call team. If people are having trouble

getting results, then they can call the BCHD COVID call center at **443-984-8650.** Hours are Monday through Friday from 8 am-6 pm and Saturday 9 am-1 pm.
2. If your office is contracting with a commercial lab to conduct COVID testing, ensure that the laboratory you have contracted with is approved by the Maryland Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) for COVID testing, and has received a Maryland COVID number. Click here for a list of approved laboratories.
3. Please click here to refer to Maryland Department of Health's new interim guidance for use of COVID-19 Point of Care testing for diagnostic or screening purposes and for interpretation of the results.
4. The Maryland Department of Health has also released an updated list of devices approved for Point of Care testing in their amended directive regarding healthcare matters. Please click here to view other updates in this directive and click here to view their latest clinician letter containing more guidance on testing.
5. COVID-19 is a reportable disease. Point-of-care test results can be updated through CRISP (if not already reporting to the Maryland Health Dept via another mechanism). Providers are also required to report COVID-19 cases by completing a case report form (Form 1140), which can be faxed to the Baltimore City Health Department at 410-625-0688.
6. See here for Baltimore City test site information including sites where patients can self-schedule testings, without a provider's referral.
7. Please refer to the Maryland Department of Health website for the most recent testing priorities when ordering COVID-19 testing. CDC has released recommendations regarding antibody testing.
8. Maryland Department of Health has updated its COVID-19 test site website with a "Find a testing site near you" feature to search by an address.

The Maryland Department of Health updated answers to the most frequently asked testing questions here. You can direct your patients to this information.

Frequently Requested Resources

1. **Physician Support:** For free & confidential peer-to-peer provider calls dial 1(888)409-0141 open 7 days a week from 8am - 12am EST, or click here.
2. **CHARMcare:** Our Community Resource Database can be found here. If you have any resources that you would like to see in CHARMcare, please e-mail Charmcare@baltimorecity.gov and Lindsay.Adams@baltimorecity.gov
3. **COVIDView:** A Weekly Surveillance Summary of U.S. COVID-19 Activity can be found here.

4. **FAQs:** Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control FAQs for COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
5. **COVID-19 forecasts:** National and State forecasts of cumulative deaths due to COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
6. **COVID-19 literature:** A summary of recently published articles focusing on COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
7. **CDC Training for Healthcare Professionals:** A hub of CDC webinars on COVID-19 Clinical Care & Infection control, PPE Donning & Doffing, Emergency Preparedness and Response can be found [here](#).
8. **Volunteer Staffing Opportunities:** information on the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MRMRC) can be found [here](#).
9. **Employment Opportunities**: Job requests for healthcare professionals and support staff can be found [here](#). Baltimore City Health Corps contact tracing and related job postings can be found [here](#).
10. **PPE Request Process**:

- Complete the MDH Emergency Medical Materials Request [Form](#).
- Send the request form to MedResourceRequest@baltimorecity.gov.
- BCHD staff will contact you directly to discuss the specifics of your request. Please allow up to 48 hours for review and processing.
- If BCHD is able to fulfill your request, you will be asked to designate a facility representative we can work with to coordinate pick-up of the supplies. Your delivery driver will be required to show a facility ID badge

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