

**Update #6 to the Higher Education Report: Recommendations for Reopening Undergraduate Colleges and Universities  
Interim Guidance for Testing Higher Education Residential Students and Residence Hall Directors  
Issued by Mark E. Ojakian, State Lead for Reopening Higher Education  
June 23, 2020**

This interim guidance, developed in consultation with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). We will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

Until a proven vaccine or approved therapy for COVID-19 is widely available, campus activity will involve some level of risk as operations resume. Institutions must develop robust and thoughtful plans for restarting operations that consider the concerns for public health. Institutions' plans must balance the health and safety of the entire institutional community, including students, faculty, and staff, with the need to resume educational activity.

Please note that this document is intended to be supplemental to federal and state requirements and guidance for institutions of higher education.

#### **TYPES OF TESTS**

SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus that causes COVID-19. Nucleic acid tests such as reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) help determine if a person is infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The following recommendations are for the use of nucleic acid tests to diagnose persons with current infection with SARS-CoV-2 virus. This document does not cover the use of antibody tests to help determine if someone was infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus in the past.

#### **WHO SHOULD GET TESTED?**

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, nucleic acid testing was not widely available, and testing was limited to symptomatic individuals who may have been in contact with someone who was ill with COVID-19. Now that testing is more widely available, testing is recommended for all persons who are symptomatic and for those without symptoms in certain circumstances.

The goals of testing people without symptoms in certain populations or groups include the following: 1) prevent transmission in congregate settings among high risk persons; 2) inform infection control measures in healthcare settings and congregate facilities; and 3) protect persons living and working in high risk settings. Given these criteria, it has been determined that residential students and residence hall directors are subject to testing. No other faculty, staff or commuter students are required to be tested.

## **Symptomatic persons**

Symptomatic persons are the highest priority for testing. Persons who test positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 need to be isolated and their close contacts need to be identified and asked to self-quarantine.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is still being passed from person-to-person in Connecticut, although much less than what was seen in April and early May 2020. Persons that have any of the following symptoms should talk to a health care provider about being tested for COVID-19 or seek testing at a community site, even if these symptoms are mild:

- Fever or feeling feverish
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

## **Contacts to persons with COVID-19**

Testing is recommended for asymptomatic persons who are contacts of persons with confirmed or probable COVID-19. Persons who are contacts to a person with COVID-19 should quarantine for 14 days after their last exposure to that person. If an asymptomatic person who had been in close contact with a person with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 tests negative during their 14-day quarantine period, this person should continue to observe quarantine for the full 14-days by remaining separated from others within their residence and monitoring for symptoms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to specimen collection).

## **Asymptomatic persons**

Testing of asymptomatic persons is not a replacement for other measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing (when possible), wearing of facemasks or cloth face coverings in congregate settings (“universal source control”), good hand hygiene, and regular cleaning and disinfection procedures.

Because some groups have been shown to be at higher risk for infection and rapid spread of COVID-19, repeated testing is recommended for asymptomatic persons without a history of recent infection in these groups for as long as infection remains present in those settings.

## **CAMPUS ARRIVAL PROCESS**

Given the close quarters of living together and the higher risk for sharing the virus than in the community at large, all students and staff residing in residence halls will be subject to testing.

- Incoming residential students must have documentation that they have had a RT-PCR COVID-19 test within 14 days of arrival on campus. This documentation must be submitted online before arrival on campus or in person on arrival.
- Students who get positive test results must notify the university and delay their arrival on campus until 10 days have passed with no symptoms from the date of the test. This time may be extended for students who become symptomatic. Self-isolation may continue beyond the minimum 10-day period until their symptoms have improved and they are fever free for 72 hours according to CDC guidelines. The school may also request a request note from a medical provider stating the student is cleared to arrive on campus.
- Students will submit an online self-screening symptom questionnaire upon arrival on campus and each day for the first 7 days on campus.
- Arrangements will be made by the university for students who arrive on campus without the required testing documentation to be tested within 7 days of arrival on campus. These students will be asked to self-quarantine until they test negative for COVID-19. Students with positive test results must self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test. This time may be extended for students who become symptomatic. Self-isolation may continue beyond the minimum 10-day period according to CDC guidelines

## **AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES**

- Any student with symptoms of potential COVID-19 infection WILL be evaluated and tested as soon as possible.
- 5% to 10% of residential students and residence hall directors will be tested weekly in each dorm using the RT-PCR COVID-19 test. This will include random sampling of the population and targeted testing. The purpose is to identify person-to-person spread of the virus and guide the implementation of control measures throughout the semester. When pooling of samples for PCR testing is approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), this approach can be used to implement screenings.
- Students and staff who test positive must self-isolate until 10 days have passed with no symptoms from the date of the test. This 10-day period may be extended for those who develop symptoms according to CDC guidelines.
- Contacts of students and staff who test positive will be identified and tested using the RT-PCR COVID-19 test. If an asymptomatic contact tests negative during their 14-day quarantine period, this person should continue to observe quarantine for the full 14-days and self-monitor for symptoms.
- Contact tracing might result in the testing of all the students and staff in a residence hall.

## **OTHER COVID-19 TESTING CONSIDERATIONS**

- The state will make testing (collection through analysis) available to public institutions of higher education at no cost for the testing of asymptomatic residential hall students and directors if not covered by health insurance. Public institutions will be connected to state vendors to secure the services.
- Private colleges and boarding high schools may be connected to state vendors to secure the same services at their cost.
- To ease the testing burden and to promote social distancing, campuses may move residential students back into dorms in stages beginning on August 14th.