

Protocol for Addressing Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Exposures

Guidance Evolving

As the pandemic progresses, public health recommendations to protect the community will also evolve. Accordingly, University departments should be prepared to react to changing guidance including the Illinois Governor's and City of Chicago Plans for reopening.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to identify procedures so that University departments can address confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 as operations resume.

This protocol applies to University persons who have any of the following:

- (1) tested positive for COVID-19
- (2) COVID-19-like symptoms but have not been tested or have tested negative
- (3) been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person and are currently asymptomatic
- (4) recently traveled internationally or to areas with widespread, ongoing transmission as defined by the CDC

Courses of Action for COVID Positives and Exposure

There are four scenarios of confirmed, suspected, or increased-risk for UChicago community members. These scenarios are individuals that have any of the following:

- (1) tested positive for COVID-19
- (2) COVID-19-like symptoms but have not been tested or have tested negative
- (3) been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person and are currently asymptomatic
- (4) recently traveled internationally or to areas with widespread, ongoing transmission as defined by the CDC

Since COVID-19 is transmitted from person to person through contact with respiratory droplets or bodily fluids, it is vital to ensure infected individuals are identified and isolated until they are no longer infectious. The following protocol is recommended in the event departments become aware of any individual matching the above scenarios:

- A. Individuals who **have tested positive** for COVID-19 will be asked not to return to campus until the following criteria are met:
 - I. Symptom-based diagnosis:
 - a) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **and**;
 - b) At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery- defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)

- B. Individuals who **suspect they may have COVID-19 due to exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms but have not been tested and confirmed as positive** will be asked not to return to campus until the following criteria are met:
- I. The individual will be expected to stay away from on-campus activities until confirmed as non-infectious by the above criteria listed in A.I.
- C. Individuals who have been informed by the University, a medical or public health entity that they **had close contact with a COVID-19 positive person** will be asked not to return to campus until the following criteria are met:
- I. The individual has self-isolated per the recommendation of the [CDC](#) for a period of 14 days and did not develop any symptoms, **or**
 - II. If during the time of self-isolation the individual develops COVID-related symptoms, the individual cannot return to campus until confirmed as non-infectious by the above criteria listed in A.I.
- D. Individuals who **have recently returned from international travel** will be asked not to return to campus until the following criteria are met:
- I. The individual has self-isolated per the recommendation of the [CDC](#) for a period of 14 days and did not develop any symptoms, **or**
 - II. If during the time of self-isolation the individual develops COVID-related symptoms, the individual cannot return to campus until confirmed as non-infectious by the above criteria listed in A.I.

By adhering to the above protocol, any individual that is confirmed to have COVID-19, has been exposed to a person with COVID-19, has traveled from area with widespread community transmission, and/or is exhibiting any type of symptom will not interact on-campus.

Additionally, adherence to the public health precautions, including wearing facial coverings, maintaining social distancing, and frequent cleaning of high-touch areas serve to limit the transmission and may eliminate the need for any additional disinfecting in areas where an infectious individual may have been on-campus. Importantly, close off areas used by the individual if cleaning or disinfecting had not yet occurred and contact Facilities Services to request.

Department heads must inform their personnel of these protocols, including the expectation to report cases covered by the above four scenarios to C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu. This will enable the University to take the appropriate course of action to potentially include notifying the Chicago Department of Public Health, conducting contact tracing, and/or determining whether additional cleaning or disinfecting is necessary.

Assumptions

- Although on-campus operations are expected to return incrementally in accordance with the State of Illinois Restore Illinois plan and relevant guidance issued by the City of Chicago, COVID-19 is still present in the community and will likely to continue to spread.
- COVID-19 is transmissible to others through contact with infected individuals.
- COVID-19 can be spread by individuals prior to exhibiting symptoms or by individuals that do not have symptoms.
- A best practice for limiting the transmission of disease is to ensure infected individuals do not interact with non-infected individuals for the time they are considered infectious.
- A vaccine for the virus that causes COVID-19 is not expected to be available for the foreseeable future.
- While tests for COVID-19 were previously in short supply, they are now more widely available and are expected to be available in the coming months.
- Groups that include individuals returning to conduct on-campus operations are: faculty, staff, postdoctoral researchers, other academic appointees, affiliates, and visitors.