

UCI Health

Clinical Update – No Re-Testing of COVID+ Patients Within 90 Days

Dear colleagues,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued guidance regarding re-testing of COVID+ patients. Dr. Susan Huang and the UCI Health Epidemiology and Infection Prevention team have reviewed this guidance and developed further direction to assist in applying this practice at UCI Health.

Please take a moment to review the clinical update below.

Sincerely,

William C. Wilson, MD, MA
Chief Medical Officer, UCI Health

Clinical Update – No Re-Testing of COVID+ Patients Within 90 Days

Per CDC guidance, providers ***should not*** retest a **COVID-POSITIVE** patient within 90 days of a positive PCR test.

Why not re-test?

- Recovered persons who are no longer contagious often shed RNA for 3+ months
- The PCR test detects both dead and alive virus, while multiple viral culture studies show clearance by day 8 of illness
- Clinically recovered persons with persistent PCR positive tests have not

transmitted to others

- Use CDC symptom- and time-based criteria for return to society, return to work, and clearance from COVID precautions
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>
 - See additional UCI communication on COVID clearance

Are there any exceptions? Yes, but very few

- **Exceptions - re-testing allowed within 90 days**
 - Inpatient is transferring to a facility requiring it
 - Clinical trial protocol requires it (must be ordered via trial protocol)
 - Infectious diseases (ID) specialist is ordering the test

NOTE: ID outpatient referral or inpatient ID consultation is required if you suspect a patient who has fully recovered from COVID-19 is experiencing a second infection with COVID-19. This has not yet been reported and would be a case reportable phenomenon requiring ID input.

- **Re-testing not allowed within 90 days:**
 - Do not send for “test of cure”
 - Do not re-test within 90 days for pre-operative/procedural reasons
 - Do not re-test because an employer demands it contrary to CDC guidance. Use CDC guidance for clearance and provide a letter confirming clearance without a test. OCHCA is asking providers to educate the public on proper clearance.
 - Thanks to Dr. Jose Mayorga, a template letter has been created using the following dotphrase in Epic .COVIDPOSRETURNTOWORK

Epic Support

- An Epic support feature reminding providers not to retest a positive patient within 90 days is in progress

