

Central Zone
Secondary Assessment Centre
General Referral Guidelines

The Secondary Assessment Centre is intended for patients with **mild to moderate illness** presenting with **infectious respiratory symptoms** who require a physician assessment plus/minus a brief period of treatment or observation before making a disposition decision.

Patients will be referred to the SAC from multiple waypoints in the healthcare system. Generally, patients presenting in any setting with an acute respiratory illness consistent with infection and any of the following Red Flags may be considered for referral to the SAC:

- HR > 110
- RR>30
- SBP < 95 mmHg
- SpO₂ < 92% on RA
- New Confusion
- New dizziness/pre-syncope
- “Non-ischemic sounding” chest pain
- New cannot walk
- New decline in self-care

Patients in the following categories should be diverted to other locations for assessment and treatment:

- Severe illness
- Patients who screen positive for COVID-19 but have complex symptoms/comorbidities likely requiring advanced diagnostic skills
- Persistent “ischemic sounding” chest pain
- Fever with no signs of respiratory symptoms
- Chief complaint is outside the current case definition for COVID-19

Prior versions of this document used vital signs in an attempt to differentiate between moderate (“CTAS 3”) and severe illness (“CTAS 1-2”). This distinction, however, is more complex than a single number. Recognizing that the difference between moderate (“CTAS 3”) and severe illness (“CTAS 1-2”) is dependent on the clinical gestalt of an experienced clinician, most decisions to refer a patient to the SAC will be made in consultation with a physician. Select patients presenting to ED pre-triage may be sent directly to the SAC without involvement of physician.

If in doubt that the patient’s primary presenting symptoms are in keeping with a respiratory infectious illness or that the patient is at risk for rapid decompensation, the

patient should not be referred to the SAC but instead, assessed in the Emergency Department.