



JEFFERSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Serving Jefferson County Since 1917

Mark E. Wilson, M.D.

Health Officer

To the Long-Term Care Facilities of Jefferson County:

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed multiple challenges to our healthcare system. Chief among those challenges is the possibility that our hospitals will not have the capacity to care for a large number of patients infected with COVID-19, and the impact of COVID-19 on Long-Term Care Facilities that house our most vulnerable patients.

To optimize both the ability of our hospitals to handle unprecedented high volumes of patients, while taking every precaution possible to protect our most vulnerable patients, the Jefferson County Department of Health endorses the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) policies outlined in "Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings (Interim Guidance)." This document can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>.

Testing supplies and testing capacity for COVID-19 remain limited in Jefferson County; therefore, we endorse the non-test-based strategy for discontinuation of transmission-based precautions. The criteria for this strategy are:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Furthermore, patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 may return to a long-term care facility prior to the above criteria being met as long as the facility uses contact precautions as outlined in "Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Setting," which can be found at (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>).

Finally, for patients who have not exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 and who are hospitalized for other reasons, a negative COVID-19 test is not required to accept the patient back to the facility.

Thank you for your support during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Wilson, MD
Jefferson County Health Officer