

COVID-19

Guide for Use of COVID Lab Testing in Decision-Making for Patients Who Need to be Hospitalized for Psychiatric Reasons

Please refer to StarPort COVID Page (or <https://medstarhealth.org/covid19resources> off network) for the complete and most current guidance as this information is rapidly changing and updated.

In developing this guide, we recognized the need to consider patient autonomy, beneficence/lack of maleficence and the well-being of staff and other patients.

All patients will be expected to undergo COVID-19 laboratory testing prior to consideration of admission. However, as is the case for all medical procedures, they have the right to refuse. If a patient refuses testing, they should be encouraged to reconsider, and testing should continue to be offered over time. In addition, refusal of testing/necessary treatments should generate evaluation of the patient’s decision-making capacity.

If a patient has tested positive within 90 days, they should not be retested. Asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic patients can be admitted to psychiatry 10 days after a positive test. If the patient is [severely immunocompromised](#), they can be admitted after 20 days.

The table below is a guide. The distinction between mild and significant medical symptoms is not clear-cut; clinical judgment will always need to be exercised. This guide should be used for both patients in our own EDs and those who are being considered for direct admission from other hospitals. It should not apply in determining whether to accept a transfer covered by EMTALA. If an admitted patient develops COVID-related symptoms, she or he will be tested and dispositioned accordingly.

	Significant medical symptoms	Mild medical symptoms	No medical symptoms
Lab positive greater than 10 days ago	Medicine	Psychiatry	Psychiatry
Lab positive within the past 10 days	Medicine	Medicine	Medicine
Lab negative	Medicine	Psychiatry	Psychiatry
Refuses lab test	Medicine	Medicine	Psychiatry
Test not resulted in 2 hours	Medicine	Emergency Medicine and Hospital Medicine services determine whether patient is admitted to Medicine as PUI or remains in ED to await result of test	Psychiatry