

<b>Title:</b> Traveling Health Care Workers returning to work at BRH during the COVID-19 Pandemic	
<b>Department:</b> Infection Prevention and Control, Employee Health	<b>Revision:</b> 9/20/2021

### Purpose:

Healthcare workers (HCW) have a heightened responsibility, above the general public, to not spread SARS-CoV-2 infection to patients under their care and to fellow HCW.

This document is intended to outline the requirements needed to return to work at Bartlett Regional Hospital (BRH) after any out of town travel.

The purpose of evaluating risk, testing and quarantining after out of town travel is to protect BRH patients, staff and the larger Juneau community from COVID-19.

### Policy:

Travel is **not** recommended for those that have **not been fully vaccinated**. Travel increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19.

Employees must plan their personal leave requests to include possible time in quarantine. The employee who travels would be subject to follow the directives that are in place at the time of their return to Juneau.

This policy is in effect for all HCW that are critical to operations that BRH has authority over, active contract with, and offer office space in lease arrangements. HCW includes all BRH staff, both clinical and non-clinical.

### Travel rules for all HCW:

- HCW must review requested time off with their director and ensure it is approved *prior* to leaving.
- HCW must read and understand this policy prior to travel.
- Any HCW who traveled out-of-town:
  - Should self evaluate their risks during travel including type of transportation, activities, exposure to unmasked populations, or exposure to any individuals experiencing illness.
    - Questions or concerns regarding risk can be directed to Employee Health or reviewed at the CDC website.
- Employees may obtain a PCR through the BRH molecular lab via the self-registration and collection process. Testing should occur before or upon return to campus.

*It is highly recommended to receive the first test prior to returning to work.* There may be exceptions that the employee's director or House Supervisor may make for vaccinated low risk travel by the HCW.

  - Adhere to universal masking, physical distancing, and hand hygiene as required on planes, trains, and buses.
  - Monitor self for symptoms

### For Unvaccinated HCW:

- Obtain a PCR test 3-5 days after arrival back to Juneau and wait for the result.
- The unvaccinated HCW may return to in person work after the first negative PCR test result and after 7 days upon return or current CDC guidelines.

### **Process for evaluating COVID-19 infection risk and making recommendations for any HCW working in-person at the hospital after travel:**

- 1) The vaccinated HCW can work in-person if they remain asymptomatic and are awaiting the PCR results.
- 2) The **unvaccinated HCW** will not be able to be physically present in hospital until results of first PCR test are known and negative.

### **Process for short-term contract work on BRH campus:**

Product reps, contract workers, and essential equipment repair technicians will gain approval from person of contact within BRH prior to arrival to Juneau.

- **Unvaccinated** Visiting HCW/ Contract Person will be subject to test within 72 hours prior to arrival to Juneau.
- A negative result is required prior to being able to work in patient care areas for all Visiting Contract Persons.
- All protective measures to protect and minimize interactions with BRH staff, patients will be in place as appropriate.

### **Final Reminder:**

If ANY HCW that develops any fever (measured temperature >100.0F or subjective fever) OR respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat)\* they should immediately self-isolate (separate themselves from others) go home and notify Employee Health.

### **Definitions:**

**Healthcare Worker (HCW):** For the purposes of this document HCW refers to all paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials, including body substances; contaminated medical supplies, devices, and equipment; contaminated environmental surfaces; or contaminated air.

**Isolation:** The separation of a person who is sick with a contagious disease from those that are not sick.

**Close contact (for healthcare exposures):** Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), of a person with COVID-19 for period of time (10 min or greater); such as caring for or visiting the patient; or sitting within 6 feet of the patient in a healthcare waiting area or room,

**Travel-associated COVID-19 exposures:** All travel for a HCW providing direct or indirect patient care is considered high risk at this time.

**Community-associated COVID-19 exposures:** Exposures that happen in the community outside of work with a known COVID-19-positive person, assessed based on symptoms of person, close contact, and their role in providing patient care at BRH. Persons exposed to a positive person in the community will follow the directives from State of Alaska Epidemiology, local public health department and BRH.

**Work-related COVID-19 exposures:** Please see Incident Directive 'COVID-19 Caregivers exposed to suspected or confirmed cases'.

### **References**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-risk.html>

[Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Work Restrictions for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to SARS-CoV-2](#)

[Return to Work Criteria for Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection \(Interim Guidance\)](#)

[Interim Guidance on Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)