



## **STAFF Q&A**

### **ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL – CURRENT OUTBREAKS**

**Last updated: January 22, 2021**

#### **1) Which units at St. Paul's Hospital are under outbreak precautions?**

- 5A/5B/CSICU (Cardiac) - declared on January 10
- 6B (Renal) - declared on January 20
- 7C (Medicine) - declared on January 22

\*Although the January 22 outbreak has only been declared for 7C, out of an abundance of caution, all Medical and Surgical units at St. Paul's are under contact and droplet precautions.

#### **2) What's being done to stop the spread of infections?**

As with any outbreak in this region, strict infection prevention and control protocols have been implemented to prevent further spread of the virus.

These include:

- Enhanced cleaning is underway. Additional housekeeping staff are being brought in to deep clean units with COVID-19 positive cases.
- Testing of all patients and staff working in affected areas
- Careful monitoring of patients, staff and physicians
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of all high-touch surfaces
- Closing the units to patient admissions/transfers
- Self-monitoring or self-isolation of staff/physicians as required
- Cohorting patients and care teams most appropriately
- Suspension of visitors to the unit (with exemptions for end-of-life situations)

#### **3) How are operations being affected in these units as well in the rest of the hospital?**

The units are closed to new admissions and transfers at this time. All visitation has been suspended until the outbreak measures have been lifted; the exception being for compassionate visits at the end of life.

St. Paul's Hospital otherwise remains open and prepared to safely receive and care for all individuals.



How you want to be treated.

**4) Is it safe to come to work in the affected areas?**

Yes - it is safe to come to work so long as proper PPE, contact and droplet precautions are used and staff are adhering to the Staff Break Room recommendations. Staff should stay home if they are feeling any symptoms, even mild, of COVID-19.

**5) I've been working in an outbreak unit over the last few weeks – do I need to quarantine?**

If you have been deemed exposed to COVID-19, you will be contacted by Public Health and advised to self-isolate at home. If you feel any symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild, you are asked to stay home, isolate, and get tested for COVID-19.

If you begin to feel symptoms, even mild, while on shift, you are asked to let your manager know and then go get tested and self-isolate at home.

**6) Where can staff get tested?**

If you have even the slightest of symptoms, please don't come to work. Get tested at an off-site testing facility and wait for the results. If symptoms develop at work, inform your manager, leave work and get tested at one of the community testing sites. Please do not attend any of the asymptomatic on site testing clinics if you have symptoms—symptomatic staff must go to a testing site.

We will have onsite testing clinics – please follow up with your leader for more details on when and where these will be taking place.

**7) I work at multiple acute care units/sites as well as within Medicine – can I continue to do this?**

No – Until the outbreak is declared over, staff on outbreak units - including casual staff – can only work on these units.

**8) Where do I pick up my hospital issued scrubs?**

You can pick up your scrubs at Linen Services.

**9) What can I tell my patients' family members?**

Conversations with patients' families regarding COVID-19 can be challenging. Here are a few talking points:



How you want to be treated.

- Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence are taking critical steps to ensure the safety of patients, staff and community with early identification of cases, prompt isolation, testing, monitoring and execution of proper infection, prevention and control practices.
- As part of our outbreak protocols we are not admitting new patients to these units, but patients will be discharged per normal procedures, with information regarding self-isolation, wearing a mask, hand hygiene, and physical distancing, as well as connecting them with Public Health for follow up.
- To ensure patient safety and minimize spread, we are unable to accommodate in-person visits at this time on outbreak units, except for compassionate reasons (e.g. at end-of-life).

**10) I've been instructed by a Medical Health Officer to self-isolate but I don't have any symptoms. Is this considered sick leave?**

If Public Health directs you to self-isolate and you are not sick, you will be placed on paid general leave.

**11) I've been instructed by a Medical Health Officer to self-isolate and I have symptoms. What happens in this case?**

If you are sick, stay home. PHC will code this as sick time. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you must remain off work. Your absence will be managed by Occupational Health & Safety in accordance with guidance from Public Health to determine when you can safely return to work.

**12) How is PHC ensuring staff are well and without symptoms before coming to work?**

All staff, including medical staff and contracted staff, working on the outbreak units must be screened for symptoms prior to the start of their shift and at least once part way through their shift. Screening must be documented and maintained by the unit.

Staff on all clinical units must complete a self-check when they start their shifts; staff in non-clinical sites must complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms (see daily event in your Outlook calendar) at the start of their work day if they plan to work on-site.

Screeners have been placed at main entrances to control staff and visitor access to ensure protocols are followed.

Staff working on the outbreak units have been tested and will continue to be re-tested as per outbreak strategy.



How you want to be treated.

**13) In CST Cerner, where can we find consistent documentation and communication for patients on droplet and contact precautions?**

On the top banner bar towards the right-hand side there is an area for precautions. The three precautions are: contact, droplet or airborne or combination of the three transmission-based precautions. Some of those precautions are initiated automatically at the triage stage if certain risk factors are in place.

For example, if at triage, a patient has respiratory symptoms and a fever, which will automatically trigger droplet and contact precautions. However, when you're doing your admission orders, you may have checked off those precautions as well. Therefore, it will appear like there are two orders in the system.

When the patient is removed from droplet and contact precautions, it's necessary to highlight both those orders under the order section and cancel both of them otherwise, it will disappear from the banner bar.

If there's inconsistency, ask another member on the clinical team to resolve the inconsistency. And if the patient doesn't require that level of precaution, please discontinue all those associated orders on Cerner. If they require additional precautions, you have to put on additional orders. The banner bar on Cerner is dynamic and changes as the orders change.

**14) How will we know when the outbreak is over?**

The Medical Health Office is responsible for declaring an outbreak over. Outbreaks are typically declared over 2 weeks following the first day with no positive COVID-19 tests. Also, variables specific to each facility will be taken into consideration and may impact this timeline.

**15) I'm worried I may bring the virus home to my family. How can I ensure that I don't?**

Regular hand hygiene and cleaning of surfaces in your home will help prevent transmission of COVID-19. In addition, if you are in a direct care role, bring your uniform or work attire to work and change prior to your shift. After your shift, change back into your street clothes and put your uniform/work attire in a plastic bag. Your uniform/work attire should be washed separately in hot water.

**16) What can I say to families who are upset by visitor restrictions?**



We understand that the current rules are upsetting for families and caregivers. If you are speaking to a family member who is upset, empathize with their concerns and remind them that the rules are in place as a precautionary measure to keep patients, staff and physicians safe.

**17) I'm feeling very stressed. What wellness supports are available for me?**

- The Wellness & Support Team encourages you to reach out for help when you need it. You're there for them. We're there for you.
- Email the Wellness & Support team via [covidwellness&support@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:covidwellness&support@providencehealth.bc.ca).
- Reach out to your Wellness Champions (if you have one on your unit currently)
- Contact the COVID-19 Support Line at 604-806-9925.
- For health & safety questions/concerns, please contact Sandy Coughlin, Director – Occupational Health & Safety at 604-341-6272.
- If you need more urgent emotional support, please contact EFAP 24/7 Telephone: 1-800-663-1142 (24/7)
- Learn more about the new and improved EFAP services [here](#).
- Don't forget, you can access the following staff resources located on our [Staff Support](#) section on the COVID-19 website. Here, you will find information about staff wellness supports and more.