

**TO:** Vermont Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities  
**FROM:** Jennifer S. Read, MD, Medical Epidemiologist

### **Hospital Discharge for COVID-19 Patients**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This Health Alert is primarily based on CDC guidance ([Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) and [Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings \(Interim Guidance\)](#)).

#### **REQUESTED ACTIONS:**

Before discharging a patient with confirmed COVID-19 disease or suspected cases of COVID-19 (test results pending), **consult with the Health Department** to assure that any post-discharge public health follow-up has been arranged. The decision to monitor a patient in the inpatient or outpatient setting should be made with the Health Department on a case-by-case basis.

- **If a patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 is discharged to home:**
  - Isolation should be maintained at home if the patient returns home before discontinuation of transmission-based precautions.
  - Key considerations are the home's suitability for (see below) and patient's ability to adhere to home isolation recommendations.
  - Guidance on [implementing home care of persons who do not require hospitalization](#) and the [discontinuation of home isolation for persons with COVID-19](#) is available.
- **For ALL patients discharged to a long-term care or assisted living facility:**
  - Before discharging a patient who was hospitalized for a reason other than COVID-19 to a long-term care facility or an assisted living facility, test for SARS-CoV-2 (the etiologic agent of COVID-19). Discharge may occur before test results are received.
  - If COVID-19 test results are pending or negative, patients should be placed in a single room, be restricted to their room, and wear a facemask during care activities for 14 days.
- **If a patient with confirmed COVID-19 is discharged to a long-term care or assisted living facility:**
  - If transmission-based precautions are still required at hospital discharge, they should go to a facility with an ability to adhere to infection prevention and control recommendations for the care of COVID-19 patients. Preferably, the patient would be placed in a location designated to care for COVID-19 residents.

- If transmission-based precautions **have been discontinued**, but the patient has persistent symptoms from COVID-19 (e.g., persistent cough), they should be placed in a single room, be restricted to their room, and wear a facemask during care activities until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
- If transmission-based precautions **have been discontinued** and the patient's symptoms have resolved, they do not require further restrictions.
- **Assess the suitability of the residential setting for home care for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19:** Health care professionals should evaluate, in consultation with Health Department staff, whether the residential setting is appropriate for home care. Considerations for care in the residential setting include whether:
  - The patient is stable enough to receive care in the residential setting.
  - Appropriate caregivers are available in the residential setting.
  - There is a separate bedroom where the patient can recover without sharing immediate space with others.
  - Access to food and other necessities is assured.
  - The patient and other household members:
    - have access to appropriate, recommended personal protective equipment (at a minimum, gloves and facemask) and
    - are capable of adhering to precautions recommended as part of home care or isolation (e.g., respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, hand hygiene).
  - There are household members who may be at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 infection (e.g., people >65 years old, young children, pregnant women, people who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions).
- **Provide guidance for precautions to implement during home care:** A health care professional should provide CDC's [Interim Guidance for Preventing Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) from Spreading to Others in Homes and Communities](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html> to the patient, caregiver, and household members.

If you have any questions, please contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or [vthan@vermont.gov](mailto:vthan@vermont.gov)

### **HAN Message Type Definitions**

*Health Alert:* Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

*Health Advisory:* Provides important information for a specific incident or situation may not require immediate action.

*Health Update:* Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

*Info Service Message:* Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.