



COVID-19 UPDATE

MEMORANDUM

CONTINUED VIGILANCE MEASURES FOR COVID-19

While the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is subsiding in many regions in Southern Africa, there is still a need to remain vigilant in all MCSA facilities and monitor developments closely for increases in new cases, a potential resurgence or a second wave.

Routine pre-operative COVID-19 testing of patients remains in place in MCSA facilities as per the POLICY ON COVID-19 TESTING FOR PATIENTS (version 4 13th August 2020).

Routine **random staff testing programmes have been halted in some of the MCSA facilities** where the incidence of COVID-19 positive staff from the samples tested remained at zero for two consecutive weeks.

In order to avoid becoming complacent it is important that hospitals maintain focus and remember to do the following:

- 1. Regularly monitor the incidence of COVID-19 cases in the community for increases in the number of new cases per 100 000 population.**
- 2. Be on the lookout for an increase of 10 to 20% in hospital or ICU admissions for COVID-19.**
3. Optimally place and manage all suspected or positive COVID-19 cases.
4. Identify, communicate, test and isolate patients showing indications of possible COVID-19.
5. Repeat testing if there is a strong suspicion of COVID-19 infection despite a previous negative result.
6. Identify, isolate and investigate cases suggestive of hospital onset or transmission.
7. Follow up and manage all potential contacts based on exposure risk.

The trends referred to in point 1 and 2 above can be tracked on the SAS COVID-19 dashboard and in COVID-19 reports.

If there is a week on week increase in new positive COVID-19 tests to above 10 per 100 000 population or a week on week increase of 10 to 20% in new hospital or ICU admissions for COVID-19 over two consecutive weeks, the HGM/HCM, ROE/RCM and Corporate Office: IPC must be informed and will advise the hospital whether staff testing programmes that were previously halted at the facility must be restarted.

A week on week increase to more than 20 new positive COVID-19 tests per 100 000 population or increase of more than 20% in new hospital or ICU COVID-19 admissions should raise great concern and in such a situation the Regional Management Teams and Corporate Office: IPC have to be alerted without delay.

In addition to testing, the following vigilance measures must remain in place as vital components of the risk mitigation in MCSA facilities:

1. Access control screening to continue for patients, visitors and staff.
2. Pre-surgery risk assessments to continue.
3. Risk assessment on admission or when condition changes, based on exposure and clinical history to inform appropriate patient placement decisions.
4. Daily symptom screening of all in-patients to identify developing COVID-19 symptoms.
5. Actions taken (e.g. contact tracing and monitoring) in response to any findings which may indicate a heightened risk.
6. Alert staff and doctors to any increase in admission numbers or community prevalence to heighten their awareness.
7. Comply with the recommended IPC principles [e.g. hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE), environmental cleaning, and social distancing] and general safety precautions at work and in the community.

Management and staff members at all MCSA facilities are urged not to drop their guard and to remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Hospital General Manager (HGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the information provided to make decisions to continue or stop testing in collaboration with the clinical team
Hospital Clinical Manager (HCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the HGM by providing clinical information about any increasing trends
Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the HGM of any increase in the number of COVID-19 positive HCWs Follow up on staff who failed access control or those that did not declare symptoms during access control

Infection Prevention and Control Manager (IPCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the incidence of COVID-19 patients in the community by utilising the NICD reports (accessible on the NICD website) • Monitor trends in the admission of positive patients by utilising the SAS COVID-19 dashboard • Inform the HCM/NM/HGM of any increasing trends
Nursing Manager (NM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the risk assessment of all patients is done in the nursing units and that the information is used to inform decisions about patient placement and management
Professional Nurse (PN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a risk assessment on all admissions • Report any abnormalities • Declare symptoms during access control
Unit Manager (UM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that action is taken when patients report symptoms during daily symptom screening • Ensure that staff report symptoms during access control and follow up on those who are a concern
IPC Team Corporate Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the incidence of COVID-19 patients per region and nationally and alert the COVID-19 Task Team of any concerning trends
Regional Clinical Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the incidence of COVID-19 patients per region and per hospital • Support the hospitals with the decision to re-implement HCW testing.

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