



August 5, 2020

## **UPDATED GUIDANCE REGARDING DISCONTINUATION OF ISOLATION AND RETESTING**

Thank you business partners for your continued cooperation with the Governor's Executive Orders. We realize that it has had a significant impact on many of your staff and businesses.

We want to provide you all with a brief update related to testing, as community spread continues to be what is driving our increased case count here in Cabarrus County.

Previously, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend two types of strategies to determine if a COVID-19 positive person could discontinue isolation. Those were:

- 1) Symptom Resolution
- 2) Test-Based Strategy

**That guidance has now changed.** Requiring a negative test to return to work is not recommended by the CDC or NC DHHS and often times is not feasible because of the strain it puts on limited testing resources. The reason for no longer recommending a 'test-based strategy' is because recovered persons can continue to shed detectable Coronavirus RNA in upper respiratory specimens for up to 3 months after illness onset. Studies have found no evidence that clinically recovered persons with persistence of viral Coronavirus RNA have transmitted COVID-19 to others. These findings strengthen the justification for relying on a 'symptom based strategy', rather than 'test-based strategy' for ending isolation of these patients. This ensures that persons who are by current evidence no longer infectious, are not kept unnecessarily isolated and excluded from work or other responsibilities.

Isolation for a positive person can generally be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset, resolution of fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and with improvement of other symptoms. CHA COVID Response staff follow each positive patient to discuss their health status and any symptom changes during isolation, allowing us to make necessary recommendations throughout the person's isolation orders.

As a reminder, to help stop the spread of COVID-19, it is strongly recommended that employers implement the following guidelines:

- Conducting daily health checks
- Conducting a hazard assessment of the workplace (see link on Reopening Cabarrus website)
- Encouraging employees to wear cloth face coverings in the workplace, if appropriate
- Implementing policies and practices for social distancing in the workplace