Information for Patients about COVID Prevention, Symptoms, Testing, and Isolation

➢ *Protecting yourself and others*
- **Get vaccinated and receive your booster shot when eligible**. Vaccine may not prevent every mild infection, but is proven to reduce infections, severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

- **Get your flu shot.** Influenza is circulating in New England and has symptoms and illness similar to, and sometimes worse than COVID.

- **Wear a close-fitting mask in indoor public spaces and whenever social distancing isn't possible**. Use good hand hygiene, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

➢ *If you have respiratory symptoms*
- Stay home from work or school and avoid public places.
- You should get tested. You can use a rapid home test kit (antigen test). If you don't have access to a home test, testing locations can be found by going to the state's testing webpage.
- Do not go to the Emergency Department to get a COVID test.
- Go to the Emergency Department or call 911 if you have severe symptoms such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or dizziness, inability to stay awake, or skin color changes.

➢ *If your COVID home (antigen) test is negative*
- **If symptomatic, isolate until all your symptoms resolve**. Consider following it up with a molecular (PCR) test at locations within the Commonwealth or repeating the antigen test 24 hours or more later. You can find **isolation** and **quarantine** guidance on the state's COVID website. You need to isolate when you are sick or when you have been infected with the virus, even if you don't have symptoms. Quarantine is for people who have been exposed to someone with COVID. Learn how to give yourself a rapid self-test.
- If you tested negative with a home test following an exposure to COVID, follow the current guidelines related to quarantine (*see below*). If you develop symptoms, you should test again.
- If you are still feeling ill, contact your physician or health care provider. They may wish to test you for other infections such as flu, for which specific treatment is available.

➢ *If your COVID test is positive*
- **If your home (antigen) test is positive, you do not need a PCR test. You are COVID positive.**
- **Isolate** and **notify your close contacts of your positive test**.
- **If your symptoms are mild**, and you are not at high risk for serious complications, stay home, stay hydrated, use over-the-counter medications for symptom relief, and isolate.
- **If you are at high risk** (immunocompromised, on cancer treatment, over age 65, or have chronic lung, health, kidney, or liver disease, diabetes, or obesity), contact your health provider. Your physician may refer you for treatment.

➢ *If you have been exposed to someone who has COVID*
- **Consider testing yourself about 5 days following exposure**, or if you have any symptoms.
- **If you aren't up to date on your COVID vaccine (primary series and booster if eligible), you should quarantine following a close contact with someone with COVID**. See the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website for the most up-to-date guidance.

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