

PRESS RELEASE



Aug. 11, 2022

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



CHCC-PR-22-047

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHCC updates screening protocol for patients and visitors

The safety and well-being of patients, visitors, and employees remain top priorities of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). With the CNMI in COVID-19 Community Level Medium, screening protocols for patients and visitors to the Commonwealth Health Center have been updated.

Effective immediately, the following protocols will be observed.

Patient Screening

PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing of all admissions is no longer required but may be requested by the attending physician prior to admission. PCR and/or antigen testing may be used by attending physicians for patients suspected of having COVID-19 as a reason for hospitalization, or for any already admitted patients who exhibit new respiratory symptoms related to COVID-19 while hospitalized.

For patients who will undergo surgical procedures in the operating room:

- Outpatient PCR/rapid antigen testing is not required for patients scheduled for elective procedure who are asymptomatic and have no known recent exposure to COVID-19.
- PCR/Rapid antigen testing is not required for all asymptomatic inpatients who are being seen for surgery or other procedures.
- PCR/Rapid antigen testing is required for all patients scheduled for elective/emergency procedure who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Elective surgery patients who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for five (5) days. Their procedure will be rescheduled.
 - Emergency surgery patients who test positive for COVID-19 will be operated on.
- All other scenarios will be at the attending physician's discretion and/or clinical situation that calls for either PCR or rapid antigen testing.
- Outpatient PCR testing will not be required for normal deliveries. Rapid antigen testing may be used in place of PCR.

For patients who will be admitted to inpatient units from outpatient clinics:

- Patients suspected of having COVID-19 as a primary reason for admission may be tested using PCR and/or rapid antigen testing.
- Patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days are not required to be tested; proof of positive test result must be verified.

For patients visiting the emergency room (ER):

- Patients in the ER suspected of having COVID-19 as the primary reason for their symptoms will be tested using PCR and/or rapid antigen testing at the discretion of the medical provider.

For patients seeking treatment under oncology services:

- Pre-chemo PCR testing remains as requested by the oncologist. This applies to admitted patients who have not been tested but are due for chemotherapy while hospitalized.

Visitor Screening

All visitors for outpatient services and inpatient settings within the hospital will be screened for flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms daily upon entry, and must use face masks properly, covering both the mouth and nose.

Any person presenting with symptoms will not be allowed inside the facility even if they present proof of a negative COVID-19 antigen test result less than 72 hours prior.

For individuals coming in to visit or watch a patient in a ward:

- Visitors, irrespective of vaccine status, must show a NEGATIVE antigen or PCR test within 72 hours to be allowed to visit or watch a patient.
- Individuals 12 years old and younger are restricted from visiting (but may be allowed by the attending physician on a case-to-case basis).
- If a visitor is symptomatic, they will be instructed to refrain from visiting or staying with an admitted patient and to remain home to self-isolate.

The following visiting hours remain in effect: 12 – 8 p.m., unless otherwise noted; and a maximum of two (2) visitors are allowed at a time. The listed specialty areas have the following visiting hours and guidelines:

- Emergency Department (ED)
 - Visitation remains flexible and at the discretion of the ED provider. One (1) support person may be with the patient during their course of stay.
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
 - 9 – 11 a.m., 12 – 8 p.m.
- Neonatal ICU
 - 9 – 11 a.m., 3 – 7 p.m.
 - Only parents of the neonate are allowed.
- Psychiatric Unit
 - 2 – 3 p.m., 7 – 8 p.m.
 - Only family members or friends as requested by the patient are allowed.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow @cnmichcc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit <https://www.chcc.health>; or call (670) 234-8950. This press release may be found online at <https://www.chcc.health/pressrelease.php>.