

November 13, 2020

Re: St. Louis County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Update

Dear Physician Community,

With the recent rapid rise of COVID-19 cases in St. Louis County, the **Department of Public Health (DPH) does not have the capacity to release each individual patient with COVID-19 from isolation at this time.** We will be focusing public health resources on case investigation of our highest risk and most vulnerable patients, as well as on outbreaks and clusters that most benefit from public health support. In addition, we have developed public facing tools for patients to self-isolate and to communicate the need to quarantine to their close contacts both inside and outside of their home.

The newly updated Third Amended Quarantine and Isolation Order includes an emergency provision that allows licensed physicians to release COVID-19 patients from isolation following CDC guidelines. Those guidelines allow release from isolation if the following conditions are met:

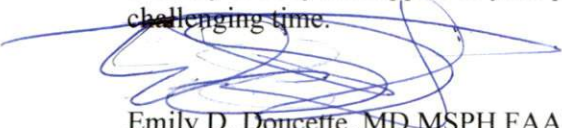
- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset or, if asymptomatic, since a positive COVID-19 test **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms have improved.

The CDC guidance on release from isolation can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.

Also, DPH will not be providing letters of release from quarantine. Close contacts of COVID-19 patients are asked to quarantine for 14 days following their last contact with the COVID-19 positive patient and are encouraged to be tested for COVID-19 if symptoms develop during the quarantine period. We also recommend testing for asymptomatic close contacts at 5-7 days after their last exposure to COVID-19 when feasible. However, contacts should continue to quarantine the full 14 days even if the testing is negative.

We ask for your help in providing clinical assessment and documentation to your patients for release from isolation after COVID-19 infection and in counseling them about appropriate isolation and quarantine procedures to prevent further transmission. We encourage you to look at the latest information about COVID-19 in St. Louis County by going to stlcorona.com. The latest trends in numbers, recommendations, and orders are posted there.

Thank you for your support of your patients, our community and public health during this uniquely challenging time.



Emily D. Doucette, MD MSPH FAAFP
Chief Medical Officer
St. Louis County Department of Public Health