

December 7, 2020

Re: St. Louis County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Quarantine Guidelines

Dear Physician Community,

We are in the process of reviewing CDC's publication *Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing*, released December 2, 2020, which outlines acceptable alternatives to shorten quarantine for close contacts of people with COVID-19. You can view CDC's new guidance at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html.

The St. Louis County Department of Public Health (DPH) is not currently making changes to our quarantine orders. DPH will align with CDC's currently recommended 14-day quarantine period and will not adopt alternative quarantine options at this time. As the new guidance reiterates, a 14-day quarantine is still the safest option to limit post-quarantine transmission risk. Close contacts of COVID-19 patients should still 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. Contacts can view detailed instructions for quarantine online at www.stlcorona.com/quarantine.

This decision was made, in collaboration with regional and state partners, based on the assessment that the residual post-quarantine transmission risk in alternate quarantine modeling is unacceptable when community transmission is at high levels. This approach puts the community at increased risk due to greater pre-test probability that an exposed person has been infected, and leads to a higher post-quarantine transmission risk, causing further community transmission. **Any future decision to follow shortened quarantine periods will be made in the context of the overall level of community transmission, and such changes to St. Louis County's quarantine orders will be communicated as soon as they are determined.**

DPH continues to seek the support of the physician community in asking licensed physicians to release patients with COVID-19 from isolation or quarantine following CDC guidelines as outlined in our Third Amended Quarantine and Isolation Order, found at <https://stlcorona.com/dr-pages-messages/public-health-orders/all-public-health-orders-archives/third-amended-quarantine-and-isolation-order/>. Updated COVID-19 statistics for St. Louis County are also available at stlcorona.com.

We appreciate your commitment to your patients and your support in counseling them about isolation and quarantine guidelines to prevent further transmission.



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