

# Interim COVID-19 Outbreak Definition for Healthcare Settings

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## Definitions

### Long-Term Care Facilities and Agencies:

#### **Long-Term Care Facilities:**

- Nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities
- Adult family homes
- Assisted living facilities
- Enhanced Services Facilities
- Intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID facilities)

#### **Long-Term Care Agencies:**

- Supported Living Agencies

### Inpatient Hospital

An institution, place, building, or agency which provides accommodations, facilities and services over a continuous period of twenty-four hours or more, for observation, diagnosis, or care, of two or more individuals not related to the operator who are suffering from illness, injury, deformity, or abnormality, or from any other condition for which obstetrical, medical, or surgical services would be appropriate for care or diagnosis. This category also includes inpatient psychiatric hospitals, residential treatment facilities, and inpatient substance use disorder facilities.

### Healthcare Worker (HCW):

HCW refers to all paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials, including body substances (e.g., blood, tissue, and specific body fluids); contaminated medical supplies, devices, and equipment; contaminated environmental surfaces; or contaminated air. HCW include, but are not limited to, emergency medical service personnel, nurses, nursing assistants, physicians, technicians, therapists, phlebotomists, pharmacists, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the healthcare facility, and persons not directly involved in patient care, but who

could be exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted in the healthcare setting (e.g., clerical, dietary, environmental services, laundry, security, engineering and facilities management, administrative, billing, and volunteer personnel).

### .Close Contact:

Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a person with laboratory positive COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period.

### OR

Having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions of the patient (e.g., being coughed on, touching used tissues with a bare hand).

### .Epi-Linkage in Healthcare Settings:

While in the facility during the 14-days prior to prior to the onset of symptoms:

- An overlap in admission or work assignment on the same unit or ward, OR
- Having the potential to have been within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period

## Long-Term Care Facilities and Agencies

This guidance applies to [long-term care facilities \(LTCF\) and agencies](#) that provide a range of health and personal services for aging individuals or people living with physical or behavioral health conditions who need assistance. Residents live in these congregate healthcare settings full-time with overnight stays. This guidance does not apply to hospitals, residential treatment facilities, or clinic settings.

### .Long-Term Care Facilities and Agencies-Acquired COVID-19 Infection:

Long-term care facilities and agencies-acquired COVID-19 infection in a resident or patient is defined as a laboratory positive (PCR or antigen) case diagnosis 14 days or more after admission for a non-COVID condition, without an exposure during the previous 14 days to another setting where an outbreak was known or suspected to be occurring.

It does not refer to the following:

- Residents or patients who were known to have COVID-19 on admission to the facility and were placed into appropriate Transmission-Based Precautions to prevent transmission to others in the facility.

- Residents or patients who were placed into Transmission-Based Precautions on admission, had no other more likely facility-source of exposure, and developed COVID-19 infection within 14 days after admission.

#### Outbreak Definition:

- $\geq 1$  long term care facilities and agencies-acquired COVID-19 infection in a resident
- $\geq 2$  COVID-19 infection in HCWs who were on-site in the long term care facility or agency at any time during their infectious period OR during their exposure period and has no other known or more likely exposure source.

#### Please note:

- **Any sudden increase in acute respiratory illness over the normal background rate (e.g., 2 or more cases of acute respiratory illness occurring within 72 hours of each other) in a long-term care facility should be reported to local public health as a respiratory outbreak, even before testing is completed.**
- **Every case of COVID-19 diagnosed in a facility should be reported to local public health.**

#### Testing in Nursing Homes:

[CMS requires testing](#) of all staff and residents if a single new case of COVID-19 is identified in any HCW or any [long-term care facility acquired COVID-19](#) in a resident.

## Inpatient Hospitals

#### Outbreak Definition:

1.  $\geq 2$  cases of COVID-19 infection in a patient 7 or more days after admission for a non-COVID condition, with [epi-linkage](#).
2.  $\geq 3$  cases of COVID-19 infection in HCW with [epi-linkage](#) AND no other more likely sources of exposure (who do not share a household, and are not listed as a close contact of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing) for at least 2 of the cases.

#### OR

- A combination of  $\geq 3$  cases of COVID-19 infection in HCW and patients with [epi-linkage](#).

## Outpatient Healthcare Settings

### Outbreak Definition:

- ≥3 cases of COVID-19 infection cases in patients or HCW, with [epi-linkage](#), AND no other more likely sources of exposure (who do not share a household, and are not listed as a close contact of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing) for at least 2 of the cases.

### Outbreak End (for all facility types)

- 28 days from the date of the last onset of [symptoms](#)  
**OR**
- From the last positive test of an asymptomatic person, whichever is longer.

## More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

A person's race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19- this is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

**Have more questions about COVID-19?** Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Weekends: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email [civil.rights@doh.wa.gov](mailto:civil.rights@doh.wa.gov).