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To: Local Health Departments and Health Care Providers

From: Catherine M. Brown, DVM, MSc, MPH, State Epidemiologist  
Larry Madoff, MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences

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RE: Revised Guidance for Discontinuation of Home Isolation of COVID-19 cases

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This revised guidance is to intended clarify updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the two options available for discontinuing home isolation of cases of COVID-19. One approach is based on the timing of symptom onset and resolution, and the other relies on the initial test-based strategy. We recommend that these options be shared with cases during initial contact and details should be made available via electronic or other means for the case to refer back to as their home isolation proceeds.

Previously, people diagnosed with COVID-19 needed to obtain two negative laboratory tests collected at least 24 hours apart in order to discontinue isolation. Recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>) outlines an alternative process.

**Either process** is available for use in Massachusetts; the criteria are outlined below:

**Time-since-illness-onset and time-since-recovery strategy (non-test-based approach)**

**Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms** and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
- At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

**ALTERNATIVE Test-based strategy**

**Persons who have COVID-19 who have symptoms** and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) **and**
- Negative results for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected  $\geq 24$  hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

**People without symptoms but with a positive laboratory test**

**Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms** may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.