

For your safety and the safety of our patients, masking is and continues to be a vital component of HonorHealth's respiratory virus prevention precautions during times of significant community spread. With respiratory virus season winding down, we're happy to report that COVID-19, influenza and RSV transmission are trending downwards and approaching off season levels.

**Beginning at 5 a.m. on Wednesday, March 1, the following changes will go into effect:**

Our masking policy will transition from **mandatory to optional** for team members, patients, visitors, volunteers, vendors and all other clinical staff across the network. This applies to all locations unless noted below.

**Masks remain required for team members, patients and/or visitors in the following situations:**

- Droplet and airborne isolation rooms.
- Oncology units for immunocompromised and neutropenic patients.
- Scottsdale Shea Bone Marrow Transplant unit.
- Virginia G. Piper Cancer Centers.

### **TEAM MEMBERS**

**Team members are required to mask in the following situations:**

- Having had close contact or higher-risk exposure to someone with COVID-19, team members need to mask for 10 days after exposure.
- Returning to work after testing positive for COVID-19. Team members that return to work after day five, must wear a mask for the remaining five days (between days six and 10) even if asymptomatic.
- A department or facility is experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak. The universal use of masking could be discontinued as a mitigation measure once no new cases have been identified for 14 days.
- Unique situations where infection control is recommended by Public Health authorities.

**If any team member or volunteer is feeling ill, tested positive or is exposed to someone with COVID-19, they should not report to work.** Individuals should notify their manager and refer to the [HonorHealth COVID-19 Return to Work Guidelines](#). Even if a team member believes respiratory symptoms are related to a non-infectious cause, a mask should be worn while working in close contact with other staff or patients.

### **PATIENTS**

**Patients are required to mask in the following situations:**

- Suspected COVID-19 infection or any other respiratory infection with symptoms (e.g., a runny nose, cough, sneeze.)
- Had close contact or a higher-risk exposure to someone with COVID-19. A Mask is required for 10 days after exposure.
- Patient is immunocompromised.

## **VISITORS**

**Visitation guidelines:** Please see [HonorHealth.com](https://www.honorhealth.com) for general visitation guidelines.

- Children 12 years of age and under are allowed with supervision, unless the unit or patient has restrictions in place; all visitors must be healthy.
- OB/Labor and Delivery: three visitors allowed at a time
- NICU: two visitors allowed; un-banded visitors must be with a banded visitor or have written authorization. No visitors under the age of 18.
- Emergency departments (including free-standing): open visitation, as waiting area occupancy allows.
- PERI-OP: open visitation, however only one visitor at a time in pre-op.
- PACU: no visitors in post-op areas.
- Bone Marrow Transplant unit: two visitors allowed at a time; all must be masked.

**Visitors should avoid entering any HonorHealth facility in the following situations:**

- Suspected COVID-19 or any other respiratory infection, or displaying symptoms (e.g., a runny nose, cough, fever.)
- Had close contact or a higher-risk exposure to someone with COVID-19 infection, for 10 days after the exposure.

## **SCREENING AND TESTING**

### **Patient screening for COVID-19**

Patients who have respiratory symptoms of COVID-19, will be admitted to a shared room, or will be discharged to a setting that requires a negative COVID-19 test.

### **Home tests results for COVID-19**

Confirm patient-reported, at-home antigen test results with a laboratory-based test to ensure the accuracy of the diagnosis, and to guide decisions about isolation and patient treatment. If there is discordance between the tests, defer to the laboratory-based test.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Meeting spaces** in all HonorHealth facilities can return to 100% occupancy. We encourage the continuity of virtual meetings for our remote employees and anyone who may not be feeling well enough to attend in-person.

We will continue using **one main point of entry** for patients and visitors in the hospitals. Hospital security offices can answer additional questions.

**For the continued safety of all team members, patients and visitors**, everyone is expected to follow HonorHealth's standard infection prevention precautions that apply to all patient care. Standard precautions include proper hand hygiene, minimizing exposure, cleaning and disinfection, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and injection safety.

Anyone may choose to continue masking based on personal preference and knowledge of their personal health risks, or those of individuals they live with and care for. Regardless of choice, we encourage all team members to stay up to date on recommended vaccines and boosters, and to know the risks related to COVID-19 and other circulating respiratory viruses. HonorHealth will keep a close eye on virus activity to ensure we are prepared for potential outbreaks.

Thank you for all that you do every day to go beyond for our patients, your colleagues and the community.

Sincerely,

**Stephanie Jackson, MD**  
Senior Vice President,  
Chief Clinical Officer

**Nina M. Shah, MD**  
Vice President,  
Chief Medical Officer

**Krystal Robinson, MPH, CIC**  
Associate Vice President,  
Infection Prevention