



April 2, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ambulatory Surgical Facilities
Community Residential Care Facilities
Day Care Facilities for Adults
Facilities that Treat Individuals for Psychoactive Substance Abuse or Dependence
Home Health Agencies
Hospices
Hospitals and Institutional General Infirmaries
Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities
Nursing Homes
Renal Dialysis Facilities
Residential Treatment Facilities for Children and Adolescents

FROM: Gwen C. Thompson, Director of Healthcare Quality

SUBJECT: Facility Staff Tuberculosis Screenings

On March 13, 2020, Governor Henry McMaster issued Executive Order No. 2020-08, which declared a State of Emergency in South Carolina based on the determination that the 2019 novel coronavirus ("COVID-19") was an imminent public health threat. Subsequently, on March 17, 2020, Governor McMaster issued Executive Order No. 2020-10, which directed state agencies to take appropriate actions regarding provisions of existing regulations that in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency. On March 28, 2020, Governor McMaster issued Executive Order No. 2020-15, which further extended the State of Emergency.

In order to expedite the hiring process during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control ("the Department") hereby waives tuberculin skin testing for facility staff prior to their date of hire, initial resident contact, or initial patient contact, if the healthcare facility complies with the following alternative:

1. For prospective facility staff with no history of testing, the facility shall conduct an individual risk assessment for each prospective staff member, including a tuberculosis symptoms evaluation. The facility shall then complete a baseline two-step Tuberculin Skin Test on the staff member within fourteen (14) days of their first day on the job. The facility may permit the staff member to initiate patient or resident contact while the staff member is being evaluated for tuberculosis, as long as the staff member does not exhibit any symptoms.
2. For prospective facility staff with a history of prior positive tuberculosis screening(s), the facility shall obtain documentation of previous screening(s) and/or treatment(s) for tuberculosis. The facility shall also conduct an individual risk assessment for each prospective staff member, including a tuberculosis symptoms evaluation. Note: If documentation of previous screening and/or treatment for tuberculosis is not available, then the facility shall complete a baseline two-step Tuberculin Skin Test on the staff member within fourteen (14) days of the first day on the job. The facility may permit the staff member to initiate patient

or resident contact while the staff member is being evaluated for tuberculosis as long as the staff member does not exhibit any symptoms.

As COVID-19 and tuberculosis share similar symptoms of cough and fever, any symptomatic staff shall not have patient or resident contact.

This waiver expires upon the expiration of the State of Emergency and is subject to modification or revocation at the Department's discretion.