Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 Testing for RNs

As an RN working during the COVID-19 crisis, if I experience COVID-19 symptoms, do I have priority for testing?

Yes, the New York State Department of Health ("NYSDOH") issued a guidance on March 28, 2020, entitled "Protocols for Essential Personnel to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection." This guidance states that essential personnel, including nurses, who have been exposed to confirmed COVID-19 cases and who experience symptoms should receive testing if they have been actively working during the COVID-19 crisis.

What if my employer states that only hospitalized RNs have priority for testing and refuses to test me?

The position of the NYS DOH is that health care workers, including RNs, have priority for testing whether hospitalized or not. The written protocol from the NYS DOH states that for essential personnel such as RNs, "Testing will be arranged for any [essential] personnel with symptoms." All hospitals must comply with NYSDOH protocols on testing.

What if my employer cites a different testing protocol to argue that I should not be tested?

Executive Order 202.11, issued on March 27, 2020 by Governor Cuomo, states that:

> *Any guidance issued by the New York State Department of Health related to prevention and infection control of COVID-19 shall be effective immediately and shall supersede any prior conflicting guidance issued by the New York State Department of Health and any guidance issued by any local board of health, any local department of health, or any other political subdivision of the State related to the same subject.*

This Executive Order provides that the protocols issued by NYSDOH for testing govern all hospitals in New York State and overrule any other guidance issued by any other local government body.

Do I still have priority for testing if I don't experience symptoms?

No- the NYSDOH guidance states that testing "will be arranged for any personnel with symptoms." However, NYSNA strongly disagrees with this and stands ready to help any nurse get a test from their employer. Contact your Rep if your employer is denying a test.

Last Revised: April 3, 2020