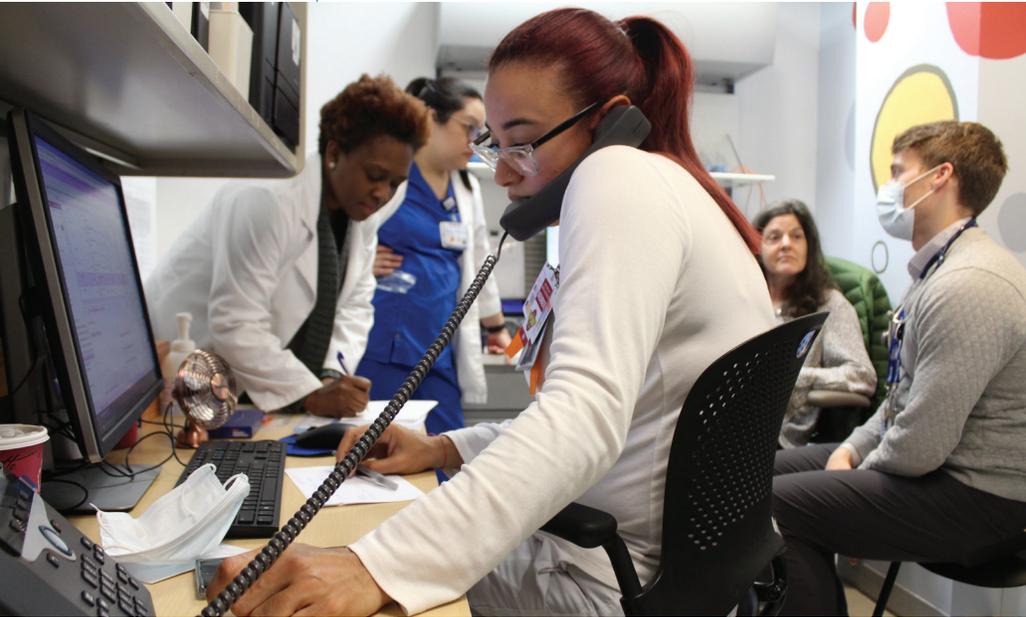


NYC Health + Hospitals Activates COVID-19 Assessment and Testing Centers



To create and increase capacity for evaluating and testing patients for COVID-19, NYC Health + Hospitals is setting up by-appointment-only COVID-19 Assessment and Testing Centers in every borough to help accommodate New Yorkers who are referred for testing. The testing centers will be located in our hospitals and large Gotham community health centers and will be set up in a combination of traditional clinic space inside facilities and in mobile, outdoor tents.

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue clinicians coordinate prepare for patients who are testing for COVID-19.

Testing will be done exclusively by appointment only, said Dr. Ted Long, Vice President of Ambulatory Care. Patients who suspect that they may have been exposed to coronavirus are being instructed to first call the health system hotline - 844-NYC-4NYC - where they will be screened by a clinician to determine if they meet indication for COVID-19 testing.

If the patient is flagged as "at-risk," they will be instructed on next steps which may include self-quarantine or isolation, an appointment for further assessment and testing, or a visit to an emergency room. The NYC Health + Hospitals Contact Center Medical Directors Drs. Madden Rowell and Ross Kristal have arranged for all New Yorkers that call to speak to a clinician around the clock.

"We're proactively reaching out to our patients to identify those who need to be tested or others who may need self-quarantine, all while maintaining our priority to keep all of our staff safe and comfortable," Dr. Long said. "We are committed to the care of our community, inside and out."

To get tested, New Yorkers should contact their provider or call 311. The 311 operator will screen people on the phone to determine if they have risk factors for COVID-19, including symptoms like cough, fever, shortness of breath, and history of recent travel to affected countries. Depending on the 311 screening, the person will be patched through to NYC Health + Hospitals for further assessment if the patient does not have a primary care clinician or if they are one of our patients.



NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln conducting assessments and testing patients for COVID-19.

At the new assessment and testing centers, patients will receive a consultation with a primary care physician to capture their full medical history before their sample is collected for testing. This will ensure that the appropriate medical treatment is provided should a test come back positive.

If a patient is determined to need of an appointment, they are not necessarily considered infected, but receive instructions to arrive wearing a surgical mask to reduce the risk of possibly

spreading the virus. The patient will be served by an attending physician or advanced practice clinician who conducts an assessment and, if needed, a swab sampling similar to what's done to confirm a flu infection. Samples collected by NYC Health + Hospitals will be sent to labs for testing. If a test result returns as positive, the patient's MyChart account will be immediately updated for their review and a physician will call them with next steps.

"The health system is taking a look at current services to efficiently test and screen people who have COVID-19, isolate those who are ill, and then to inform colleagues, testing facilities and the patient," said Andrew Wallach, MD, Chief Medical Officer of Ambulatory Care. "The process is part of guiding principles that inform NYC Health + Hospitals' quality care in the face of a pathogen."

"Anytime there is an epidemic or a virus that quickly spreads, there is concern," he said, "but this is what we do. We are trained professionals."

Fighting pathogens is nothing new for NYC Health + Hospitals, he said. Clinicians will rely on their experience combating past viruses including H1N1, Zika, and Ebola. As before, clinicians have been instructed to wear protective equipment while conducting the COVID-19 test.

"We have researchers who are recognized globally for their expertise in managing pathogens like COVID-19," Dr. Wallach said. "We know the best practices for testing and treating COVID-19, because we helped create them. We're making sure that we are providing comprehensive education and exercises to protect ourselves."

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