Clinical Alignment Summary: COVID-19 Discharge Guidance

The purpose of this summary is to display how clinical guidance from different organizations is aligned in this topic area.

Prior to Discharge

- Identify the patient’s psychosocial environment and post-discharge needs early in their hospital course. Engage with case management, other hospital disciplines/teams, and local departments of public health, if needed, to create a safe discharge plan (1,2,3).
- Decide if patient will require Isolation instructions or Test Based Strategy prior to discharge (1,2). Most patients will not require repeat COVID-19 testing (1). Refer to Isolation Precautions Summary.
- Verify contact information for patient and primary community support person and adequate support and resources at home (3).
- Provide enough medication to last the duration of isolation period and two surgical masks (3).

Decision to Discharge

Patients should self-isolate at home until they meet all three criteria: (1,4,5)

1. Fever resolved without antipyretic for at least 3 days
2. Improved respiratory symptoms
3. At least 10-14 days have passed since first symptoms appeared

- Repeat testing NOT required to achieve resolution of infection status (4).
- Two negative COVID-19 tests over 24 hours apart required for discharge (5).
- Infection control approval is required to resolve infection status/isolation orders (5).

Establish a Discharge Plan

ALL PATIENTS

- If the patient has a PCP, follow-up with PCP via phone or telemedicine in 2-5 days. If no PCP follow-up may be facility specific. Some hospitals have established teams to follow up on patients (1) Instruct patient to inform PCP of COVID-19 status for care coordination needs (3).
- Ensure patient has a safe, private method of transportation to their discharge destination (2,3).

DISCHARGE TO PRIVATE RESIDENCE

- Contact local department of public health/hospital infection control to determine safest feasible post-hospital discharge location (2).
- Establish return criteria and instructions in the case that symptoms return or worsen (1,2).

PATIENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- Coordinate with case management to establish a discharge plan (1,2).
- Consider the Test Based Strategy if placement is delayed or isolation is not feasible (1); Refer to Isolation Precautions Summary.
- Establish follow up communication (1).
- Establish return criteria and instructions in the case that symptoms return or worsen (1).

DISCHARGE TO INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

- Work closely with case manager to ensure appropriate placement (1).
- Determine the institution’s ability to isolate patients and when necessary complete Test Based Strategy to take patient off precautions (1,4). Refer to Isolation Precautions Summary.

Safe Discharge Considerations

- Confirm patient able to manage ADLs independently or with available home support (2,3)
- Ensure the patient has arrangements for safely obtaining medications, grocery shopping, and other necessary ADLs (2,3).
- Ensure home health needs (oxygen, thermometers, etc) are met (1,2).
- Provide information/resources regarding the infectious risk patient poses to household contacts and others (1,2,3,4).
- Consider unique discharge coordination if other members of household are hospitalized simultaneously (2).
Special Considerations for Vulnerable Populations

**IMMUNOCOMPROMISED**
- Immunocompromised patients may shed virus longer than other patients. Consider the Test Based Strategy to establish resolution of disease if patients need future ambulatory or other medical care (1); Refer to Isolation Precautions Summary.
- Communicate with specialists to clarify post-discharge care (2).

**AMBULATORY DIALYSIS**
- Patients requiring ambulatory hemodialysis may be able to attend COVID-19 positive dialysis centers. If not, consider the Test Based Strategy to establish resolution of symptoms (1,2).

**Sources**

2. UCSF Inpatient Adult COVID-19 Management Guidelines, Updated 6/05/20
3. University of Washington Discharge Home Checklist for Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19, Updated 4/01/20
5. Massachusetts General Hospital Criteria for Resolution of COVID-19 Infection Status and Discontinuation of Isolation, Updated 6/22/20

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Version 1.1 6/25/20