



# COUNTY OF ERIE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**HEALTH ALERT PRIORITY # 355**

**April 13, 2020**

## **COMMISSIONER'S STANDING ORDER DIRECTIVE FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COLLECT SPECIMENS FOR COVID-19 TESTING IN ERIE COUNTY**

*Please distribute to All Hospitals, Emergency Departments, Urgent Care Facilities, Community Medical Providers, Long Term Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Group Homes, and any other medical professionals collecting COVID-19 specimens.*

### **SUMMARY**

Attached are directives for Medical Professionals and individuals who collect specimens for COVID-19 testing in Erie County:

- “Standing Commissioner’s Order for Isolation of Lab Confirmed COVID-19” which I, the Erie County Commissioner of Health, issued on April 9, 2020. This Order instructs all Erie County health care providers who collect specimens for COVID-19 testing to (1) provide a copy of the Standing Order to each person tested, (2) verify the person’s phone number, address, race, and ethnicity to include in the laboratory requisition and (3) place a copy of the Standing Order in their place of business where it may be viewed by persons seeking testing.
- New York State Department of Health Release from Isolation guidelines for Lab Confirmed COVID-19 persons to self-release themselves from isolation and return to work.
  - COVID-19 Release From Home Isolation – March 28, 2020
  - Protocol for Personnel in Healthcare and Other Direct Care Settings – March 31, 2020
  - Protocol for Essential Personnel – March 31, 2020
- Question and Answer document regarding COVID-19 Isolation.

### **DIRECTIVE**

This Standing Order directs any person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to isolate themselves until such time as they have met the “COVID-19 release from home isolation” criteria promulgated by the NYS Department of Health on March 28, 2020. It also contains the following directives for medical professionals and individuals who collect specimens for COVID-19 testing:

- 1) Any doctor, hospital, or other medical provider or facility operating within the County of Erie must provide a copy of the Standing Order to any person who has tested positive for COVID-19 at the same time as the provider or facility is providing the results of the positive test or, in lieu of providing the order, shall inform the person of the order and direct them to the Health Department’s website for a copy [www.erie.gov/covid19](http://www.erie.gov/covid19). The provider or facility must maintain documentation of compliance with this provision.

The Erie County Department of Health does not provide medical advice. The information provided on the Erie County Department of Health website is not an attempt to practice medicine and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is for informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of your personal physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or issue. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of the content found on the Erie County Department of Health website or this correspondence.

- 2) Every doctor, hospital, or other medical provider or facility operating within the County of Erie must conspicuously place a copy of this Standing Order in their place of business, where it may be viewed by any persons seeking treatment or testing. The Standing Order must also be posted on the web site home page of each doctor, hospital, or other medical provider or facility operating within the County of Erie.
- 3) Any person who collects a specimen from an individual for the purpose of COVID-19 testing must provide such individual with a copy of the Standing Order or direct them to the following website [www.erie.gov/covid19](http://www.erie.gov/covid19) and verify the individual's telephone number, address, race, and ethnicity to include in the laboratory requisition.

It is critical that our medical community assist in preventing the spread and transmission of this highly infectious disease. As such, the Erie County Department of Health encourages you to take additional steps to ensure that your patients are aware of their obligation to isolate if they are infected with COVID-19, such as posting the Commissioner's Order on your website home page and explaining the mandate to isolate at the time of testing.

This Standing Order incorporates New York State Department of Health guidance relating to the release of persons from isolation. Under that guidance, which is attached to the Standing Order, individuals can self-release from isolation under the following circumstances:

If the individual experienced any of the following symptoms: Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing, the Clearance Criteria are:

- At least 7 days have passed since onset of symptoms; AND
- They have been afebrile for at least 3 days, without taking fever-reducing medication; AND
- Any shortness of breath/coughing/difficulty breathing has improved.

If the individual has not experienced any of those symptoms, the Clearance Criteria are:

- At least 7 days since they first tested positive for COVID-19; AND
- They have not developed any subsequent illness

If the individual is a Health Care Provider or Essential Personnel, I have attached additional guidelines regarding returning to work.

I have also included a FAQ that you should distribute to your patients regarding isolation and release.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

↑ [www.erie.gov/covid19](http://www.erie.gov/covid19) → "ECDOH COVID-19 Packet of Information"

For further information, please contact the Erie County of Department of Health, Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance during normal business hours at (716) 858-7697.

The ECDOH Health Alert & Advisory System is an e-mail notification system designed to alert community partners about important health related information. You can sign up to receive alerts & advisories at

<https://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=health-alerts-advisories>

#### **Health Category Definitions:**

**Health Alert FLASH:** conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Alert Priority:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary

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