

Contingency Strategy Return to Work Criteria for Staff with Confirmed COVID-19 Infection

If the facility is experiencing staffing shortages, despite all efforts to mitigate such shortages from occurring, the facility, and the NYSDOH, may determine that in order to ensure adequate resident care is provided, certain staff members with a confirmed COVID-19 infection should return to work before the conventional return to work criteria has been met.

The facility must understand that allowing staff members with confirmed COVID-19 infections to return to work prior to meeting the conventional return to work criteria could result in healthcare-associated COVID-19 transmission. Therefore, the facility should inform residents, resident’s responsible parties, and staff members that the facility will be utilizing contingency strategies, and specify the changes in practice that should be expected, and describe the actions the facility will be taking to protect staff and residents from exposure to COVID-19 if staff members with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection are requested to work to fulfill staffing needs.

Illness Category	Moderately-Severely Immunocompromised	Return to Work	Other Consideration
Asymptomatic	No	May return if feeling well enough and willing to work on day 6 (5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared), AND at least 24 hours have passed since last fever w/o the use of fever-reducing medications, AND symptoms have improved. If returning to work on day 6 - a respirator or well-fitting mask should be worn at all times while working until day 11 . These staff should be utilized to work on COVID-19 designated units and/or with COVID-19 positive residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respirator or well-fitting mask should be worn in all areas, including non-resident areas such as staff breakrooms. • When needing to remove mask to eat, drink, etc., the staff member should separate themselves from others. • The staff member should maintain physical distancing practices when around others as much as possible. • When the staff member is interacting with residents, every attempt should be made for the resident to wear a well- fitting mask as much as possible and tolerated.
Mild-Moderate	No	May return if feeling well enough and willing to work on day 6 (5 days have passed since positive test). These staff should be utilized to work on COVID-19 designated units and/or with COVID-19 positive residents.	

Reference:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html>