



December 7, 2020

Summary: Change in Quarantine Procedures to Achieve Early and Safe Return to Work

The CDC has recently issued alternative guidelines that can reduce the time period for quarantine but potentially introduce some risk. By using repeat testing however, we can safely shorten the quarantine period and return individuals to work and family while simultaneously keeping everyone protected.

In the updated algorithm, the quarantined asymptomatic provider can undergo PCR (gold standard) nasopharyngeal swab testing via a testing site at day 7 of quarantine. If this gold-standard test returns negative, then the quarantined (asymptomatic) individual is approved to return to work. Upon return, the quarantined individual needs to test upon arriving at work with the point-of-care COVID test (POCCT), which returns a result in approximately 15 minutes. If this POCCT result is also negative, the individual is safe to return to duty (formally exits quarantine status). The individual repeats the POCCT evaluation coming onto shift until 14 days since their original exposure. The risk of active infection with this strategy approaches 1 in 1000 (0.1%).

This new strategy enables quarantine to end substantially sooner while maintaining a safe workplace.