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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** NYS Public Mental Health Programs

**From:** Dr. Thomas Smith, Chief Medical Officer, NYS OMH  
Robert Myers, PhD, Senior Deputy Commissioner, NYS OMH  
Christopher Smith, PhD, Associate Commissioner, NYS OMH  
Donna Bradbury, MA, LMHC, Associate Commissioner, NYS OMH  
Dr. Flavio Casoy, Medical Director for Special Projects, NYS OMH

**Date:** May 20, 2021

**RE:** Updates to Infection Control Manual for Public Mental Health System Programs

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The Office of Mental Health has updated the Infection Control Guidance for the Public Mental Health System and converted it into a manual. This memorandum lists the updates since the [previous version](#) issued on November 12, 2020. Agencies should use the enclosed manual to update their Programs' Policies and Procedures.

- The “Guidance for Staff” section has been shortened and directly links a separate “Return to Work” guidance documented posted on the OMH Guidance Page.
- Individuals are fully-vaccinated two weeks after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine series or two weeks after receiving a one-dose vaccine.
- Recommendations about masks and faceshields are clarified throughout document. Staff who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks at all times unless alone in own office. A faceshield is recommended, if available, for unvaccinated staff members when interacting with clients.
- Fully vaccinated individuals no longer need to quarantine on admission to congregate care programs or when returning to residential programs from hospitals.
- Removal of prior references to NY Forward program. Removal of “Enhanced Precautions” determination. Removal of language about prioritization of scheduled encounters over walk-ins.
- Removal of obsolete guidance about transportation and deep cleaning.
- Specific recommendations to free-standing Article 31 hospitals have been included about routine testing of staff who are not fully vaccinated.
- Specific recommendations made for free-standing Article 31 hospitals about testing staff and patients when there is a new cluster in the facility.
- Clarification of testing recommendations for other congregate settings, including those serving youth.
- Updates consistent with DOH May 4, 2021 guidance on discontinuation of isolation in congregate settings.