



District 1199C
National Union of Hospital and
Health Care Employees AFSCME



April 6, 2020

Honorable Mayor Muriel Bowser
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Testing of health care workers exposed to COVID-19

Dear Honorable Mayor Bowser:

The undersigned urge you to implement testing for all health care workers exposed to an individual who has contracted COVID-19 during the initial 14 days of quarantine. We also urge you to implement a 14 day period of paid pre-cautionary leave/quarantine for health care workers who have been exposed.

The incubation period for COVID-19 is up to about 14 days, based on available evidence. Accordingly, it may take up to 14 days after exposure to know if an individual has been infected. The test (RT-PCR) for COVID-19 detects viral particles in a sample. A positive test indicates that there are enough viral particles in the sample to register as a positive result. A negative test indicates that there are no or not enough viral particles present in the test to register.

The COVID-19 test does not determine if a person has developed an immune response to a pathogen. All the COVID-19 test is able to detect is if viral particles are currently present in an individual's body/bodily fluids (for COVID-19, usually throat and nose swabs are taken, sometimes sputum samples from deeper in the lungs).

Based upon the evidence reviewed, we believe an aggressive approach on testing must occur now. Tests for health care workers who have been exposed should be performed

at multiple intervals within the 14 day period following exposure. We see what is happening in other areas of the nation when doctors and nurses contract the disease and are unable to care for patients. If an inordinate number of clinicians become ill in the District, it will result in a tremendous strain on D.C. hospitals to deliver care during this crisis, and we don't want that to occur in the nation's capital.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Smith, Esq.
Executive Director
DC Nurses Association

Dyana Forester
Political & Community Affairs Director
United Food and Commercial Workers
Union, Local 400

Elizabeth Falcon
Executive Director
DC Jobs with Justice

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