

**DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Memorandum

Date: March 8, 2022

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations (15)

Subj: Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Masking and Screening Testing Guidance for VHA Staff in Healthcare Settings

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)
VISN Chief Medical Officers
VISN Chief Nurse Officers

Thru: Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Support Services (19)

1. This memorandum provides clarification on masking and testing guidance for staff in VHA healthcare and non-healthcare settings in accordance with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Deputy Secretary's [Updated Guidance on Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Community Levels, Mask Wearing, and Screening Testing](#) message, issued March 2, 2022.
2. The guidance in the Deputy Secretary's message comes from the following two resources, which do **NOT** apply to staff in healthcare settings:
 - a. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) recommendations, issued February 25, 2022.
 - b. Safer Federal Workforce Task Force [Initial Implementation Guidance for Federal Agencies on COVID-19 Community Levels and Mask-Wearing](#), issued February 28, 2022.
3. Generally, healthcare settings in VHA are considered locations where healthcare services or healthcare support services are provided to patients or residents (e.g., hospitals, Community Living Centers). Local site assessments on whether a building or structure at a VHA facility constitutes a healthcare setting can be determined using the framework from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS): [Is your workplace covered by the COVID-19 Healthcare ETS?](#)
4. Requirements for staff masking in VHA healthcare settings can be found in the VHA [Moving Forward Guidebook](#); in the [Aligning Facility COVID-19 Plans with OSHA ETS Requirements](#) memorandum, issued July 21, 2021; and in CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

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5. Requirements for staff screening testing in VHA healthcare settings can be found in the [COVID-19 Testing Process for Unvaccinated Employees](#), issued January 27, 2022, with updated attachment in [VHA COVID-19 Testing Process for Unvaccinated Employees](#), issued February 15, 2022; and the [VHA Testing Guidebook](#).
6. Staff in non-healthcare settings in VHA must follow the VA Deputy Secretary's [Updated Guidance on COVID-19 Community Levels, Mask Wearing, and Screening Testing](#) message, issued March 2, 2022, for masking and screening testing.
7. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to the [COVID-19 Resource Room](#).



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