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Jimmy H. Baker
CHANCELLOR

MEMORANDUM #2020-EXE-065 (REVISED)

Date: September 24, 2020

To: Presidents, Alabama Community College System
Alabama Community College System Office

From: 
Jimmy H. Baker, Chancellor

Re: **(REVISED)** -- Return to Work/Classes following positive COVID results or COVID Exposure

This memorandum supersedes MEMO-EXE-065. Updates are reflected in red font.

As we enter into several months of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to urge you to continue to be vigilant in your efforts to maintain modified social distancing and hygiene practices for the continued protection of students, faculty, and staff.

We are continuing to monitor the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) websites, in order to provide you with new and/or clarified guidance regarding COVID-19 related issues. New information has been released in September 2020 that will supersede our guidance from MEMO-EXE-065.

Persons arriving to campus/work WITH signs/symptoms of COVID-19

Should a faculty/staff or student arrive to campus/work exhibiting signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, and shortness of breath), institutions should ask the person to leave campus and consult a healthcare provider before returning to campus/work. Further, if the person is an employee then the institution should continue to utilize *MEMO-EXE-029 (Paid Leave through April 30)* regarding the use of sick leave.

Per the CDC and ADPH, retesting is not recommended within 3-months after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection.

ACCS strongly encourages the use of the symptom-based strategy outlined below.

Persons WITH Positive COVID-19 test results returning to campus/work:

The following CDC guidance should be utilized when providing guidance to students, faculty/staff returning to work and/or campus.

1. **Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms** and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
 - At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*, **and**
 - At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as the resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvements in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath)
2. **Persons with COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms** and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their first positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy listed in 1. Above should be used.
3. **Persons who received a second positive COVID-19 test within three months of the initial positive test and who have not had any symptoms may return to work/campus under the following conditions:**
 - At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*, **and**
 - At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed since recovery - defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), **and**
 - The individual has received clearance from a healthcare provider (e.g. physician or mid-level provider) that he/she may return to work/campus

NOTE:

- *CDC data shows that a person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within three months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive test result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19.*
- *Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.*

(ADPH, CDC, September 2020)

Any college with a student or faculty/staff member who reports a laboratory-confirmed positive test for COVID-19 should also notify Rachel Bunning, Communications and Marketing Administrator, Alabama Community College System, (o) 334-29-4651, (c) 334-328-6191, or Rachel.bunning@accs.edu.

Persons with EXPOSURE to laboratory-certified POSITIVE COVID-19

For the purposes of this memorandum, the definitions below are to be utilized in determining the appropriate response by the college.

DEFINITIONS:

Exposure is defined as *close contact*

Close Contact is defined as within 6 feet of a person with a COVID-19 for at least 15-minutes without an N-95 mask and includes household contacts, intimate partners, and in-home caregivers, starting 2 days before symptoms appeared or specimen collection date (whichever was earlier). Distance could be longer and time shorter, depending on the exposure level and setting.

1. Employee/Student is EXPOSED to someone with a POSITIVE COVID-19 Test AND the exposed individual has signs/symptoms of COVID-19:

- Institutions should ask the person to leave campus and consult a healthcare provider before returning to campus/work.
- If the person is positive for COVID-19, follow steps for persons with positive COVID testing
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*, **and** at least 1 day (24 hours) has passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath).

2. Employee/Student is EXPOSED to someone with an initial (first) POSITIVE COVID-19 test AND the exposed individual does NOT have signs/symptoms of COVID-19:

- The individual is asked to self-isolate for 14 days following the last exposure to the positive case, even if the individual obtains a negative test result (Viral or Antibody) or does not obtain testing at all. A negative test does not necessarily mean the person is negative or will remain negative. These individuals must complete the 14-day isolation period. If the individual tests positive during the 14-day quarantine, the guidance above for persons with positive COVID-19 results would apply.

3. Employee/Student is EXPOSED to someone with a second POSITIVE COVID-19 test within three months of the initial COVID test AND the EXPOSED individual does NOT have signs/symptoms of COVID-19:

- The individual should self-monitor for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolation is not necessary.

NOTE: following the three month mark of the initial POSITIVE COVID-19 test, any individual exhibiting signs/symptoms of COVID or those who are exposed to someone with an initial test should fall into the exposure category outlined in numbers 1 or 2 above.

The above guidance is based on the most recent updates from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and/or Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH).

Please update your colleges reopening plan as to how the college will handle these situations in accordance with this revised memorandum.

Thank you for all the hard work and dedication you and your staff continue to do every day to safeguard the wellbeing of our students and staff.

/kk

cc: President's assistants, Alabama Community College System