

Updated 08/04/20

Dear members of the Austen Riggs Center Community:

It has been some time since we've sent out an alert and I'm happy to say that it reflects the current stable conditions in Massachusetts and the region around it, as well as at the Center itself. As I reported in my last communication, we continue to have no patients who have tested positive for COVID-19. Also, there have been no additional cases beyond the two staff members who were diagnosed early in the pandemic and who have since recovered.

Our success so far stems in large part from the fact that we have been extremely careful in our admissions policy of bringing in new patients under a strict procedure of COVID testing and quarantine. Thanks to the easing of restrictions in the New England states, plus New Jersey and New York, we adjusted quarantine standards in line with guidance from the governor and state health officials. For patients coming from states designated by Massachusetts as "[low risk](#)," the length of quarantine has been reduced from our previous mandatory 14 days to a shorter period determined by two negative test results for COVID-19. To ensure the safety of the Riggs community, patients transitioning to the residential program prior to completing a full 14-day quarantine will continue to be monitored twice daily for signs and symptoms of the virus for the full 14 days and are required to wear a medical-grade surgical mask at all times when outside their rooms. Patients traveling from high-risk areas OR with suspected or confirmed exposures to COVID-19 will join the full residential program only after verified completion of the 14-day quarantine AND two negative test results.

During the quarantine period all new patients have remote access to a wide range of services, including individual psychotherapy, nursing, and other clinical meetings, groups, and therapeutic community programming. They also have the option of several outdoor quarantine breaks a day on the Riggs campus, using social distancing and other safety measures.

To learn more, please visit our [Admissions with Quarantine webpage](#). Should you have any questions not covered there, please feel free to contact the Center via the instructions below.

As always, my thanks for your support and trust as we move forward in these challenging times.

Be well,

Eric M. Plakun, MD
Medical Director/CEO