

# SUPPORTING PATIENTS WITH LONG COVID

## COMMITMENT TO PATIENTS

*"My doctor's ability to keep coming up with things to try and reminding me of the small successes has really helped."*

As a clinic, we are committed to, as appropriate:

- Screening patients for Long COVID and documenting prevalence
- Adding Long COVID to the visit diagnosis and to the patient's problem list
- Following up with patients about their Long COVID symptoms and trajectory
- Being candid with patients about what we know and don't know about Long COVID
- Asking patients about what they are trying at home or with other health practitioners

## DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR LONG COVID (POST ACUTE SEQUELEA OF COVID)

Long COVID is diagnosed clinically. Criteria include a history of COVID infection (either documented, or classic symptoms and history of exposure) and continued symptoms weeks to months after the acute infection resolved.

Diagnostic approach:

- Careful history with documentation of the dates of acute infection
- Assessment of physical, and psychological symptoms and energy level
- Use of objective measures as much as possible
- Targeted lab and imaging based on primary symptoms (i.e., chest pain is primary symptom, then an EKG and echocardiogram is indicated)

## TIPS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

*"[My doctor] says, "... you need to take time and when you feel badly, you need to use your FMLA." So, that kind of gained our trust back a little bit."*

- Encourage patient to apply for Family Medical Leave (FMLA) to protect employment while recovering
- Tell patients Long COVID is a disability under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), which means they will be able to get workplace accommodations
- Document Long COVID thoroughly to support accommodations

## TIPS TO SUPPORT DISABILITY NEEDS

*"I know now there's some talk of certain long COVID things being covered as a disability ... [how that will work], you know, legally, well, since I never had a positive test?"*

- Document COVID infection date
- Add "Long COVID" or "sequelae of COVID infection" to diagnosis and problem list
- Clearly document all relevant symptoms
- Describe the patient's limitations tying their symptoms to concrete activities of daily living (e.g. driving, grocery shopping, cooking)
- Thoroughly document patient follow-through on healthy behaviors recommendations and healthy living suggestions

