Question: Does OhioHealth test patients multiple times?
Answer: In most situations, a patient only receives one COVID-19 test. In certain clinical scenarios, a repeat test is indicated. An example is when a patient presents with COVID-19 symptoms, initially tests negative for COVID-19, but the physician strongly suspects that the patient has COVID-19. We follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 testing recommendation guidelines and evolve our practices as new information about the virus is discovered and updated guidelines are shared.

Question: If a patient receives more than one COVID-19 test at OhioHealth, are they counted in the state's COVID-19 data as separate COVID-19 cases?
Answer: No. Cases are counted at the individual level, meaning one positive test for one patient is counted one time in the state of Ohio's numbers. If a patient received multiple negative or positive tests, the results are still only associated with one individual, and therefore counted once. Ohio Department of Health has a mechanism for ensuring that Ohio is not counting multiple positive coronavirus tests as new cases.

Question: Does OhioHealth inflate the number of COVID-19 cases to increase reimbursement?
Answer: No. A COVID-19 diagnosis requires documentation, such as a positive test. Falsifying documents by misclassifying a diagnosis would be unethical and illegal. At OhioHealth, physician documentation is further scrutinized by our peer review programs to ensure accuracy of data.

Question: If a patient comes to the hospital with heart disease, but tests positive for COVID-19, how are they counted?
Answer: In healthcare, patients can have both a primary and a secondary diagnosis, and are accordingly coded. So in this example, the primary diagnosis would be heart disease. The secondary diagnosis would be coded as COVID-19. If the patient expired, the death certificate would show similar information. COVID-19 is a multi-system disease and is associated with a variety of non-pulmonary pathology.

Question: Who gets prioritized for testing?
Answer: Currently, OhioHealth is only testing patients who have a provider's order. Throughout this pandemic, testing recommendation guidelines have evolved and OhioHealth follows guidelines provided by the CDC and Ohio Department of Health.

Question: Why does OhioHealth perform different "swabbing" COVID-19 tests?
Answer: OhioHealth is doing nasopharyngeal sampling (though the nose) for COVID-19 when people are admitted to the hospital and oral pharyngeal (through the mouth / throat swab) for ambulatory/outpatient testing. On the outpatient side, we are testing symptomatic people; an orally obtained test from a symptomatic patient is an appropriate test. No COVID-19 test is 100% sensitive and test results need to be interpreted individually within the patient's clinical context. You can learn more from OhioHealth about different tests here.