



HEALTH ALERT NETWORK BROADCAST

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FROM: CO-CDPHE

SUBJECT: HAN Update - COVID-19 New and Updated Information | March 3, 2020

RECIPIENTS: Local Public Health Agencies / IPs / Clinical Labs / EDs / ID Physicians / Coroners

RECIPIENT INSTRUCTIONS: Local Public Health Agencies - Please forward to health care providers. This information is for the public health and health care community. Do not post this document on a public web or social media site

HEALTH UPDATE | COVID-19 New and Updated Information | March 3, 2020

This HAN contains:

- Updated testing criteria and laboratory submission guidance.
- Updated and new guidance documents published by CDC for health care facilities, health care personnel, and optimizing use of respirators.

Health care providers: Please distribute widely in your office. This information is for the public health and health care community. Do not post this document on a public web or social media site.

Key points

- Health care providers no longer need preapproval from public health for testing and specimen submission, as long as they adhere to testing criteria below and answer all required questions at the time of test request. CDPHE remains available for consultations as needed.
- Specimens from patients who do not meet criteria and specimens that do not meet the submission guidance below will not be tested.
- Asymptomatic people should not be tested.
- The CDPHE laboratory is operating seven days a week, testing for COVID-19. The lab will perform two testing runs daily, at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. All test requests and required information must be at the lab and approved one hour prior to the scheduled run.

Testing criteria

Specimens for COVID-19 will only be tested if they meet one of the three criteria below

Criteria	Clinical Features		Epidemiological Risk
1.	Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset
2.	Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza) ¹	AND	A history of travel to areas with ongoing community transmission within 14 days of symptom onset
3.	Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza)	AND	No source of exposure has been identified

¹Please note this guidance varies slightly from CDC. As we have capacity, Colorado will continue to consider testing for individuals who are not hospitalized in order to identify patients who have traveled to affected areas who have less severe disease. Fever can be subjective or confirmed.

²Geographic areas with ongoing community transmission are changing rapidly. CDC's travel website has a list of affected geographic areas <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. CDPHE is available at 303-692-2700 to provide consultation on travel risk.

Laboratory submission guidance

- The State Laboratory at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is operating seven days a week, testing for COVID-19. The lab will perform two testing runs daily, at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. All test requests and required information must be at the lab and approved one hour prior to the scheduled run.

- With current staffing and equipment resources, the state lab has the capacity to test up to 160 samples per day, assuming test kits from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are continuously available.
- Turnaround time for results is expected to be within 24 hours of receipt of specimens at the State Laboratory. Confirmatory testing on positive specimens will be performed at CDC but will not delay reporting or our public health response.
- Specimen test requests **must** be submitted through the LabOnLine electronic test request portal at <https://labonline.cdphe.state.co.us/Account/SignIn> and include all required specimen, patient and epidemiological information (symptoms, travel dates & locations, hospitalization).
- To set up a LabOnLine user account you must first complete the LabOnLine User Agreement. For LabOnLine user access assistance: cdphe_labonline@state.co.us, 303-692-3399 or <https://sites.google.com/state.co.us/lsd-horizon-lims/labonline>. Users from facilities that do not permit Google access may need to call or email for assistance in setting up their LabOnLine user accounts.
- **All specimen transport to the State Laboratory is through your routine courier shipping methods. On-demand courier service is available on a case-by-case basis and requires prior authorization and extenuating circumstances by calling 303-815-7220.**
- Currently acceptable sample types include nasopharyngeal (NP) and/or oropharyngeal (OP) swabs in viral transport media. Additional sample types may be requested by CDPHE on a case-by-case basis (including lower respiratory specimens for patients with more severe illness). Store samples at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours post collection; after 72 hours samples must be frozen.
- At this time, there is no cost associated with COVID-19 testing at the State Laboratory. Depending on insurance status, patients may still be charged for their health care visit; please make sure the patient understands this if you are recommending that they seek care for the purpose of COVID-19 testing.

Healthcare guidance documents

Health care facilities should review their existing emergency preparedness plans and the following CDC guidance:

- “Resources for Healthcare Facilities” -- a landing page for health care mitigation strategies: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>.
- “Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)” -- includes general steps that health care facilities can take now to prepare for COVID-19, including review of emergency preparedness plans, and processes for communication, protection of the

workforce, and protection of patients:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/steps-to-prepare.html>.

- “Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities: Preparing for Community Transmission of COVID-19 in the United States” -- includes strategies for triage, healthcare worker utilization and safety, surge capacity, and considerations for outpatient, inpatient, and long-term care facilities:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/guidance-hcf.html>.
- “Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF)” -- includes steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 into and within facilities as well as to prevent inter-facility spread:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>.
- “Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators” -- includes conventional capacity, contingency capacity, and crisis alternate strategies:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>.
- “Checklist for Healthcare Facilities: Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators during the COVID-19 Response” -- includes strategies or options on how healthcare facilities can optimize supplies of disposable N95 filtering facepiece respirators when there is limited supply availability:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/checklist-n95-strategy.html>.
- “Release of Stockpiled N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators Beyond the Manufacturer-Designated Shelf Life: Considerations for the COVID-19 Response” -- includes information that may be used to inform product release decisions:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/release-stockpiled-N95.html>.
- “Resources for Hospitals and Healthcare Professionals Preparing for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19” -- includes checklists for healthcare providers and hospitals that identify key actions that can be taken now to enhance preparedness for potential or confirmed patients with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19):
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/preparedness-checklists.html>.

More information

- CDPHE COVID-19 web page: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus>.
- CDC COVID-19 web page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.
- For questions about COVID-19 in Colorado, call the **CDPHE Disease Reporting Line: 303-692-2700** or 303-370-9395 (after hours)