



## PROVIDER HEALTH ALERT UPDATE

APRIL 24, 2020

### 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INFECTIOUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

Since shelter-in-place, social distancing and universal masking practices have been put in place in Contra Costa County and other Bay Area Counties, our communities have successfully “flattened the curve”, slowing the rate of increase of new COVID-19 cases. As Public Health leaders in the Bay Area consider relaxing shelter-in-place to allow increased economic activity in the coming weeks, providers need to be vigilant for any increases in cases of COVID-19.

A key strategy in controlling the disease throughout the community must be to dramatically increase testing compared to current practice. We now have increased capacity to test for COVID-19 in our county, in the region and state. **Please consider testing all patients** who have symptoms concerning for COVID-19.

**Typical symptoms** include:

- fever (may be subjective) or
- symptoms of acute lower respiratory illness such as cough and shortness of breath

Patients may also present with **atypical symptoms**:

- Fatigue, chills, myalgias
- Headache, sore throat, rhinorrhea
- New loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea

**Elderly patients** may also present with weakness, confusion, dizziness, falls or a subtle change from their baseline, all consistent with a febrile syndrome, without evidence of clinical fever.

COVID-19 testing for symptomatic patients in a **high priority group** -- patients who are most vulnerable to severe disease, and patients who may expose vulnerable people -- should have **expedited testing**, with results in 24 hours or less. Expedited testing may be available through provider network or commercial labs, or through the Contra Costa Public Health Lab (CCPHL).

High priority groups include:

1. **Persons who live or work in congregate facilities:**
  - Skilled nursing, board and care, assisted living and other senior living facilities
  - Shelters, group homes, residential treatment programs
  - Jails
2. **Homeless persons** regardless of current status of shelter
3. **Healthcare workers and first responders**
4. Persons who receive **dialysis** or **chemotherapy** in clinic settings
5. Persons who are **hospitalized**



Serological testing for SARS COV 2 has become available through the FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), and many unauthorized serology tests are also available. Please be aware that at this time, **serology testing must not be used for diagnosis** of acute COVID-19 infection. The only tests which are authorized for use in diagnosis of COVID-19 are nucleic acid amplification tests, such as PCR.

**Actions Requested of Healthcare Professionals:**

1. **Identify and test** all patients with symptoms concerning for COVID-19. Consider both typical and atypical symptoms, and unusual presentations particularly in the elderly.
2. **Isolate** patients with suspected disease and implement appropriate infection control including recommended PPE for health care workers (see website for more details).
3. **For patients in high priority groups** listed above, used **expedited testing** for rapid results. If sending for expedited testing through Contra Costa Public Health Lab:
  - **Obtain a PUI #** from Contra Costa Public Health (or your Infectious Disease leads)
  - **Complete the COVID-19 CMR** form and **CCPHL requisition** form. CCPHL will test specimens ONLY if received with a completed COVID-19 CMR including PUI #, and lab requisition form.
  - **Send specimen with both forms to CCPHL**
4. **Test other patients through network or commercial labs** with routine priority:
  - **If COVID-19 result is positive, report to Contra Costa Public Health** by submitting a completed **COVID-19 CMR** form by FAX to Public Health at (925) 313-6465. PUI# is not required for these tests and reporting.
5. **If you are concerned that an outbreak may be occurring in any congregate setting**, please call Public Health immediately at 925-313-6740.

For more information and updates for:

For providers: <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/healthcare-providers>

For general information about coronavirus: <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/>

- For information about Drive-in community testing, [COVID-19 Testing by appointment](#)
- For information about [Health Care Worker and First Responder testing](#)
- For information about [SNF mobile testing](#)

