Dear Contra Costa County Healthcare Providers,

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. Planning is now underway for how to safely modify shelter-in-place requirements so that some economic activity can resume while avoiding a dramatic surge in cases. One requirement laid out in Governor Newsom’s plan to reopen California is to dramatically expand testing for COVID-19 to include all symptomatic individuals as well as targeted screening to identify asymptomatic cases. Increased testing is necessary in order to identify and isolate all patients with COVID-19 and quarantine their contacts.

Testing capacity has increased in Contra Costa County and across the state, and clinical guidance has continued to change with increasing knowledge of the virus. Given this increase in testing capacity, Contra Costa Health Services encourages providers to test all patients with symptoms, both typical and atypical, of COVID-19. Because tests and testing supplies may still be in short supply in some situations and test turn-around times can vary between laboratories, please review the following priority guidelines:

Please test all symptomatic patients who you suspect may have COVID-19:

Clinical criteria include typical symptoms such as fever (may be subjective) or acute lower respiratory illness such as cough and shortness of breath.

Also consider testing patients with febrile syndromes or atypical symptoms including some which have been frequently identified with COVID-19 infection:

- Elderly and others with weak immune response may not mount a clinical fever, and fever at time of presentation is not required to meet criteria. Consider that subjective fever, fatigue, myalgias, dizziness, altered mental status or falling may also suggest a febrile illness.

- Atypical symptoms suggesting COVID-19 infection may include:
  - Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
  - Sore throat, congestion, rhinorhea
  - Loss of sense of smell or taste
Priority 1 – Symptomatic Patients in High Risk Settings

*Use labs with rapid turn-around-time (commercial labs with a turn-around time of 24 hours or less or the County Public Health Lab)*

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

Priority 2 – Symptomatic Patients in All Other Settings

*Use labs with routine priority*

- All other symptomatic persons in community settings

* SOS = Sensitive Occupations and Settings

Sensitive settings include:
- Jails
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Homeless shelters
- Rehab programs
- Elder care facilities
- Other congregate living settings
- Dialysis centers
- Hospitals

Sensitive occupations include:
- Health care workers
- Personal care workers for elderly and medically vulnerable
- First responders
- Workers in other congregate living settings
For all of its challenges, the COVID-19 response has reinforced the strong partnerships that Contra Costa Health Services has with our many community partners. We appreciate all the excellent work that you have been doing to protect our community from this pandemic and look forward to continuing this effort together.

In partnership,

[Signature]

Chris Farnitano, M.D.
Health Officer of the County of Contra Costa

Dated: April 25, 2020