



PROVIDER HEALTH ALERT UPDATE
MARCH 10, 2020
2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INFECTIOUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

SUMMARY:

The information contained in this Health Alert supersedes guidance contained in previous Health Alerts. This is an evolving situation and new developments will likely lead to revised guidance. We are developing a provider page specific to coronavirus that will be available soon: cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php. Once available, please visit and bookmark for the latest COVID-19 information and guidance.

Community spread of COVID-19 has been established in Contra Costa County. COVID-19 testing is now available commercially and does not require a COVID ID# (formerly PUI#). However, specimens submitted to the Contra Costa Public Health Lab for testing will still require a COVID ID# (formerly PUI#).

As we expect numbers of cases will continue to increase and as most people infected will have mild disease, we strongly encourage healthcare providers to advise patients with mild symptoms not requiring medical care to stay at home and to only seek medical attention when symptoms worsen.

The latest CDC guidance states that clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested. Clinicians are strongly encouraged to test for other causes of respiratory illness such as flu. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever (subjective or confirmed) and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing).

Highest Priority Patients for Testing:

1. Hospitalized patients or patients from high-risk settings such as nursing homes or long-term care facilities who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
2. Other symptomatic individuals such as, older adults (age ≥ 65 years) and individuals with chronic medical conditions and/or an immunocompromised state that may put them at higher risk for poor outcomes (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, receiving immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease).
3. Any persons including healthcare personnel¹, who within 14 days of symptom onset had close contact² with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient, or who have a history of travel from affected geographic areas (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>) within 14 days of their symptom onset.
4. Mildly ill patients should be encouraged to stay home until symptoms resolve and contact their healthcare provider by phone for guidance about clinical management. Patients who have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, should seek care immediately. Older patients and individuals who have underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their physician early in the course of even mild illness.



¹For health care workers, testing may be considered if there has been exposure to a person with suspected COVID-19 without lab confirmation.

²While not using appropriate PPE: being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time, or, having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (being coughed on).

Actions Requested of Healthcare Professionals:

1. **Identify** patients who may have respiratory illness caused by COVID-19.
2. **Immediately isolate** patients with suspected disease and implement appropriate infection control.
 - a. Place surgical mask on patient and place patient in private room with door closed (optimally, a negative-pressure, airborne isolation room).
 - b. Implement all of the infection control procedures listed below for healthcare workers:
 - Standard precautions **AND**
 - Contact precautions (gloves, gown) **AND**
 - Airborne precautions (N95 mask or PAPR) **AND**
 - Eye protection (face shield or goggles)
3. **Immediately report** by **PHONE** high risk patients (e.g. healthcare workers, residents of long-term care facilities, dialysis patients, etc) to Contra Costa Public Health at (925) 313-6740 or (925) 313-6441 after hours **AND FAX** the CCHS PUI form (cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) and a face sheet to (925) 313-6465. For all other patients, please **FAX** the CCHS PUI form (cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) and a face sheet to (925) 313-6465.
4. **Submit** isolation agreement form (cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) via fax if discharging patient home as a PUI or a confirmed case.

Please continue to collect both a nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab for testing. **Note that both swabs can be placed in the same viral transport media collection tube.** Contra Costa Public Health (CCPH) lab will continue to accept specimens for high priority patients for testing (e.g. severely ill, resident of a long-term care facility, dialysis patient, etc) and that mildly ill or low priority patients should have their specimens sent to a commercial lab such as Quest or LabCorp. Patients tested through CCPH lab will need a COVID-19 ID number (formerly PUI#) that can be obtained by calling (925) 313-6740 or after hours (925) 646-2441 and ask for the Health Officer On-call.

For all patients who get testing at either a commercial lab or a public health lab, please fill out the CCHS PUI intake [form](https://cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) (cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) with either the COVID # or where specimens have been sent, and a patient facesheet with patient demographics to Contra Costa Public Health at 923-313-6465.

Management of Patients Who Are Awaiting Test Results or Are COVID-19 Positive:

Please advise patients that are not hospitalized that they should remain in home isolation until they receive the results of their test. Instructions for home isolation and agreement can be found [here](https://cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php): cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php. Please have patient sign the [home isolation agreement](#) and fax this form to Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6465.

Note: It is the responsibility of the healthcare provider to inform the patient of their results. If negative, patients may be taken off isolation with general recommendations to stay home while ill. If positive, patients should be notified and told to remain isolated, and informed that public health will be following up with them.



For patients who are found to be COVID-19 positive and who will be managed at home or are being discharged from the hospital, please have them review the isolation instructions and sign a [home isolation agreement](https://cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) (cchealth.org/coronavirus/providers.php) and fax this form to Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6465.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2019 Novel Coronavirus Situation Summary – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html
- CDC’s Current Criteria for Suspected 2019-nCoV Cases (Person Under Investigation/PUI) - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html
- CDC’s Current Infection Prevention and Control Guidance - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html
- CDC’s Current Guidance for Specimen Collection, Handling, and Testing - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html

