



Technical Bulletin



Date: April 20, 2020

Topic: Updated Testing Criteria for COVID-19

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To: Health Care Providers, Medical Facilities and Laboratories

Background:

Limited information is available to characterize the spectrum of clinical illness associated with COVID-19. No vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19 is available, and care is supportive. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) clinical criteria for considering testing for COVID-19 have been evolving as testing supplies become available and based on what is currently known about COVID-19 infection.

Despite a slow start, it seems that testing supplies and availability are gradually improving. In addition to the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory (NSPHL) and Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory - Quest Laboratories, LabCorp and several other commercial and hospital-based labs are currently well-equipped to conduct a large number of COVID-19 RT-PCR tests in a timely manner.

As COVID-19 laboratory testing capacity is improving in Nevada, and the state continues to prepare for incremental steps to ease social distancing measures steps need to be taken to allow for more testing. Increasing the number of diagnostic COVID-19 RT-PCR laboratory testing is essential to early detect and isolate cases (patients with positive test results), and promptly identify and quarantine all contacts (individuals who were exposed to COVID-19 case).

It is essential to expand COVID-19 laboratory testing to include all patients exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection and ensure a more robust approach to rapid infection control and containment within our state.

Testing Criteria:

Clinicians should test patients that present with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) use the following clinical criteria:

- Persons with at least two of the following symptoms: fever (measured or subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, new olfactory and taste disorder(s).

OR

- Persons with at least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing

OR

- Severe respiratory illness with at least one of the following: clinical or radiographic evidence of pneumonia, or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

AND

- No alternative more likely diagnoses

Persons meeting the above criteria should be considered for laboratory testing. RT-PCR Testing is currently done at several Nevada commercial labs, hospital labs and the two Nevada public health laboratories. For additional information regarding sample collections and handling please review CDC recommendations at the following website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>

Reporting:

Health care providers should **immediately** notify both infection control personnel at their health care facility and their local/state health department in the event of a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.

- Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH): (775)-684-5911 (M-F 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM); (775)-400-0333 (after hours)
- Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD): (702)-759-1300 (24 hours)
- Washoe County Health District (WCHD): (775)-328-2447 (24 hours)
- Carson City Health and Human Services (CCHS): (775)-887-2190 (24 hours)

For More Information: Please contact DPBH M-F 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at (775)-684-5911. The after-hours line can be contacted at (775)-400-0333.



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