Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing information for healthcare providers

Healthcare providers should use clinical judgment when deciding to test patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., fever cough, shortness of breath). The guidance below is developed taking into consideration national shortages of testing availability.

THE FOLLOWING PATIENTS WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS SHOULD BE TESTED:

- Patients hospitalized with severe lower respiratory illness.
- Patients who live or work in an institutional or congregate setting (corrections, shelters, etc.).
- Patients who work in any setting where healthcare services are being delivered (hospital, behavioral health facilities, long-term care facilities, corrections, etc.).
- Patients working in other public safety occupations (law enforcement, firefighter, EMS, etc.).
- Patients working in critical infrastructure occupations (grocery stores, pharmacist, restaurants, gas stations, public utilities, etc.).

THE FOLLOWING PATIENTS WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS ARE AT HIGH-RISK FOR POOR HEALTH OUTCOMES AND SHOULD CONTACT THEIR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER TO EVALUATE THE NEED FOR TESTING:

- Patients older than 60 years
- Patients with underlying medical conditions or who are immunocompromised
- Pregnant women

HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS (LESS THAN 60 YEARS OLD) WITH MILD ILLNESS DO NOT NEED TO BE TESTED AND TESTING IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PERSONS WHO ARE ASYMPTOMATIC

Not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19. We don't currently have medications to treat COVID-19, so whether you test positive or negative, your healthcare provider's advice for managing your symptoms will be the same.

ROLE OF THE PROVIDER

If COVID-19 is being considered, whether testing is performed or not, please provide patients with the following guidance documents so they know how to best prevent the spread of infection to other people, and to minimize phone calls to your office and to public health.

- What to do if you are awaiting test results or tested positive for COVID-19.
- What to do if you were exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19.

REPORTING CASES OF COVID-19

All suspect and confirmed cases are immediately reportable to the local health department per the Reportable Disease Rule 64 CSR-7.

TESTING SOURCES

TESTING AT COMMERCIAL OR HOSPITAL LABORATORIES

In general, healthcare providers should send specimens for COVID-19 testing to commercial or hospital laboratories. Please be aware of your facility's turn around time. Providers should also be attuned to specimen collection instructions specific to that laboratory. Some labs are able to utilize alternative specimens and/or media.

THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 CAN BE TESTED AT DRIVE THROUGH CLINICS, AS AVAILABLE:

- Patients who live or work in an institutional or congregate setting.
- Patients who work in any setting where healthcare services are being delivered (hospitals, behavioral health facilities, long-term care facilities, corrections, etc.).
- Patients working in public safety occupations.
- Patients working in critical infrastructure occupations.
- Patients at higher risk of poor outcomes (e.g., elderly, underlying conditions, etc.)
- Any other patient referred by physician.

TESTING AT THE STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LAB

The West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services is prioritizing testing to support public health activities including outbreak investigations and contact tracing of laboratory confirmed cases.

In urgent situations involving immediate protection of health and safety, testing of other priority groups may be considered. Testing criteria is available at www.coronavirus.wv.gov.