To: Physicians and other health care providers

Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH**
Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182
Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

**Steven Krager, MD, MPH**
Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182
Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alert categories:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Alert:</strong> conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health Advisory:</strong> provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health Update:</strong> provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.</td>
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Update and interim guidance on outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to closely monitor and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak caused by the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Community spread of SARS-CoV-2 appears to be occurring in Washington, although no cases have been identified in Southwest Washington at this time.

Updated Criteria for SARS-CoV-2 testing through Washington State Public Health Lab

Due to high volume of requests, SARS-CoV-2 testing through the Washington State Public Health Lab will be reserved for patients who meet the current CDC person under investigation (PUI) criteria:

COVID-19 should be suspected in patients who present with:

- Fever OR signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) AND any person, including health care personnel, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset.
- Fever AND signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization AND a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of symptom onset.
- Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g. pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome) requiring hospitalization and without an alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g. influenza) AND no identified source of exposure.

For additional details on the CDC PUI criteria refer to: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html These criteria are subject to change as additional information becomes available.

To request permission to test for SARS-CoV-2 through the WA Public Health Lab:

- Health care providers should call their local health jurisdiction (LHJ) to determine whether a patient meets the PUI criteria and warrants testing through the Washington State Public Health Lab.
- If SARS-CoV-2 testing is approved by the LHJ, the LHJ will provide the ordering provider with the 2019-nCoV ID for that patient. The ordering provider will need to include this 2019-nCoV ID on the Washington State Public Health Lab 2019 nCoV Sample Submission Form.

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Specimen collection guidance:

- Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a PUI is identified, regardless of the time of symptom onset.
- Refer to the Washington State Public Health Lab Microbiology Laboratory Test Menu page for detailed guidance on specimen collection and handling.

Testing options for individuals that DO NOT meet PUI criteria

For patients that do not meet the PUI criteria and testing through the Washington State Public Health Lab, providers can now directly order SARS-CoV-2 testing through the University of Washington’s Virology Lab.

- Collect a Nasopharyngeal (NP) or Nasal swab in universal transport medium (UTM) or viral transport medium (VTM) and refrigerate, double bag specimens.
- Fill out a virology requisition and write in NCVQLT.
- Further instructions for shipping can be found here: [testguide.labmed.uw.edu/public/view/NCVQLT](https://testguide.labmed.uw.edu/public/view/NCVQLT) or call (206) 520-4600 or 1 (800) 713-5198.

Providers will need to confirm with their lab services what their internal processes are for ordering this test through University of Washington’s Virology Lab.

Infection control


Background

The outbreak that began in Wuhan, China has now spread throughout China and to 78 other countries and territories, including the United States.

The risk of exposure is increasing for people who live in communities in Washington state with reported spread of COVID-19, though risk is still relatively low. As of 3/3/2020 there have been 18 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Washington State, along with 6 deaths.

Thank you for your partnership.

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<td>Clark County Public Health</td>
<td>564.397.8182</td>
<td>564.397.8080</td>
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<td>Cowlitz County Health Department</td>
<td>360.414.5599</td>
<td>360.425.7531</td>
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