



Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

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Health Officer Alert for Hospitals, Clinics and Health Care Partners

April 10, 2020

1. **Announcing COVID-19 Clinician Hotline (707) 472-2606 from 8am to 8pm**
for:
 - Requesting **facilitated COVID-19 testing** through Mendocino County Public Health Department
 - Reporting COVID-19 **positive test results**
 - Consultation with Public Health regarding patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 prior to **transfer to a SNF** via hospital discharge, inter-facility transfer, or readmission after hospitalization
2. **Facilitated testing for COVID-19 through Mendocino County Public Health Department for Hospitals and Clinics**
3. **Isolation and Quarantine Health Officer Blanket Orders and Requirements**

INTRODUCTION

The Mendocino County COVID-19 Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and Mendocino County Public Health does not provide direct clinical care. The role of the EOC is to coordinate care with health care partners in our regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in general the EOC does not screen and collect samples for testing from patients with suspected COVID-19. The EOC DOES coordinate testing for certain populations in coordination with our health care partners as described in this Health Alert.

1. **New Mendocino County EOC COVID-19 Clinician Hotline (707) 472-2606**

As of April 9, 2020, the Mendocino County COVID-19 EOC has a Clinician COVID-19 Hotline. This line is answered by Public Health staff and messages are checked every hour, on the hour, from **8am to 8pm 7 days a week**. A Public Health nurse or doctor will return the call promptly.

The Clinician COVID-19 Hotline facilitates the following THREE functions:

- 1) Requesting Public Health **facilitation for COVID-19 testing** for health care partners.
- 2) Reporting **positive** COVID-19 test results.
- 3) Consultation with Public Health regarding patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 prior to **transfer to** a SNF via hospital discharge, inter-facility transfer, or readmission after hospitalization

If your call is not answered promptly, please leave a message. Please state why you have called (reporting positive result or facilitation of testing or SNF transfer). Leave your name, phone number, the name of your health care institution and a single point of contact (name and

phone number) at your facility. Please speak slowly and clearly and repeat each phone number one time.

This Hotline is monitored from 8am to 8pm daily. Messages left overnight will be promptly returned in the morning.

2. Facilitated testing for COVID-19 through Mendocino County Public Health Department for Hospitals and Clinics

Across the United States, the current situation for COVID-19 testing is highly problematic due to shortages of the viral test sampling materials and limited testing capacity. In response to this challenge, Mendocino County Public Health has developed a process for facilitating COVID-19 testing for our health care partners, as described below. As this is a rapidly evolving pandemic, we expect this approach to change over time. We will provide updates as changes to this testing strategy occur.

Currently, the Mendocino County Public Health Department can facilitate targeted testing through our affiliated Public Health lab, located in Santa Rosa. Health care partners who get prior approval from the Mendocino County Public Health Department, can collect samples for COVID-19 testing, and these samples will then be delivered by the Public Health Department to the Santa Rosa Public Health lab for testing.

Request for facilitated Public Health testing is initiated by calling the COVID-19 Hotline (707) 472-2606 (described above). The facilitated Public Health testing then occurs by a defined procedure that is initiated ONCE a day between 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. as defined in the procedure below.

Commercial testing does not require any involvement from the Public Health Department EXCEPT THAT ALL POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULTS MUST BE IMMEDIATELY REPORTED TO PUBLIC HEALTH BY CALLING the COVID-19 Hotline at (707) 472-2606 (described above).

In the COVID-19 pandemic **CONTAINMENT AND MITIGATION** phase that we are in (focused on isolating cases and slowing spread) and with the present national shortage of testing capability, Public Health facilitated testing for COVID-19 is now limited to **SYMPTOMATIC** (history of subjective fever or objective temperature 100 or higher and lower respiratory symptoms such as cough) persons in these categories:

TESTING PRIORITIES

1. Health Care Workers (HCW)
2. All Public Safety Personnel (e.g., First Responders, Fire, Law Enforcement)
3. Persons of PUBLIC HEALTH priority (ANY ONE OF THESE CATEGORIES)
 - a. Who are **SERVING THE PUBLIC** (e.g. Emergency Operations Center, essential business employees, volunteers performing essential functions)
 - b. Who are **HIGH PUBLIC HEALTH RISK** (e.g. nursing home residents, people experiencing homelessness, incarcerated people)
 - c. Have **HIGH RISK EXPOSURE within 14 days** (likely *close contact with COVID-19 case such as household member of case or travel to areas outside Mendocino County with COVID-19 community transmission)

- a. Close contact is defined as—
 - i. Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case or suspected case for a prolonged period of time (10 minutes or more); close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case; or
 - ii. Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case or suspected case (e.g., being coughed on)
4. Emergency Department and Hospitalized patients, who in the clinical judgement of their treating clinician along with the guidelines of their health care system, would have change in the management of care if COVID-19 test was POSITIVE.

Health care partners can request that patients in these defined categories received expedited Public Health testing by the procedure defined below. Requests must be approved by the EOC and a health care partner will be responsible for sample collection.

OF NOTE, immune compromised patients may be tested twice.

OF NOTE, due to false negative rate associated with the COVID-19 test, high clinical suspicion of COVID-19 should guide clinical decision making even if COVID-19 result is negative. A single negative test may not be sufficient for ruling out COVID-19 in a patient highly suspected of having COVID-19. Repeat testing may be required and isolation should be maintained if suspicion for COVID-19 is high.

PATIENTS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

1. **Any person tested for COVID-19 must be placed in contact and droplet ISOLATION by the provider doing the testing until the test result is known.**
2. **POSITIVE TEST RESULT MUST BE IMMEDIATELY REPORTED TO PUBLIC HEALTH BY CALLING THE COVID-19 HOTLINE AT (707) 472-2606 AND BY COMPLETING CMR which should be faxed to (707) 472-2714**
3. COVID-19 positive patients RELEASE FROM ISOLATION
 - a. These patients may be released from HOME isolation and Return to essential activities and essential work outside the home ([AS DEFINED BY SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER](#)) 7 days after symptom onset AND when afebrile for 72 hours without anti-pyretic, AND when symptoms are improving AND **when cleared by their health care provider and appropriate authority**. These individuals must wear a surgical mask or facial covering when they return to essential activities and essential work outside the home for at least 14 days after symptom onset.
 - b. Due to false negative rate associated with the COVID-19 test, high clinical suspicion of COVID-19 should guide clinical decision making even if COVID-19 result is negative. A single negative test may not be sufficient for ruling out COVID-19 in a patient highly suspected of having COVID-19. Repeat testing may be required and isolation should be maintained if suspicion for COVID-19 is high.

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING FACILITATED PUBLIC HEALTH COVID-19 TESTING

1. Clinician or Designated nurse managers or other health care partners may request testing for specific patients by calling COVID-19 Hotline daily **(707) 472-2606** between 8:00am – 8:00pm.
2. Health Officer will determine if the patient is eligible for testing and assign a Public Health PUI number (Persons Under Investigation) to each eligible patient. This number must be included in all labeling of samples collected by the clinician.
3. Daily between 9:00-9:30 a.m. Public Health coordination of facilitated testing will be initiated.
4. Clinicians should collect samples using approved COVID-19 sampling kits and store them per the Santa Rosa Public Health Lab guidelines (guidelines available on request via the COVID-19 hotline or online on the [Mendocino County COVID-19 Provider webpage](#)).
5. Public Health will assist clinicians with completion of required Public Health documentation. Two forms are required: 1) The Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory COVID-19 Test Requisition Form and 2) The demographic section of the Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR)
6. Public Health will only pick up properly labeled and packaged samples for transport by County Courier to Santa Rosa Public Health Lab. Specimens must be received by the Public Health Lab by 5pm Monday – Friday, and by noon on Saturday. There is NO Sunday delivery, as the lab is closed to receiving specimens.

3. Isolation and Quarantine Health Officer Blanket Orders and Requirements

Blanket Orders for Isolation and Quarantine have been released by the Health Officer on 4/9/2020. These orders require all individuals with known or suspected COVID-19 disease to follow the isolation and quarantine guidelines listed in the order and included below. These orders also obligate the health care provider who is involved in the COVID-19 testing to inform the patient about these Isolation and Quarantine orders and to instruct the patient to follow the order. The clinician shall give the patient a printed copy of the Isolation and Quarantine requirements included in the order, placing a label or other form of patient information on the order with the patient's name, and including the time frame of the order on the document.

For educational materials about Isolation and Quarantine at home please see the [Mendocino County COVID-19](#) website and for CDC materials visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>

ISOLATION

Patients who are symptomatic for COVID-19 and are suspected or confirmed cases, including any person being tested for COVID-19, must be placed in contact

and droplet **ISOLATION** by the provider ordering the testing until the test result is known.

COVID-19 positive patients RELEASE FROM ISOLATION:

- a. These patients may be released from HOME isolation and Return to essential activities and essential work outside the home ([AS DEFINED BY SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER](#)) 7 days after symptom onset AND when afebrile for 72 hours without anti-pyretic, AND when symptoms are improving AND **when cleared by their health care provider and appropriate authority**. These individuals must wear a surgical mask or other facial covering when they return to essential activities and essential work outside the home for at least 14 days after symptom onset.
- b. Due to False Negative rate associated with the COVID-19 test, high clinical suspicion of COVID-19 should guide clinical decision making even if COVID-19 result is negative. A single negative test may not be sufficient for ruling out COVID-19 in a patient highly suspected of having COVID-19. Repeat testing may be required and isolation should be maintained if suspicion for COVID-19 is high.

QUARANTINE

Asymptomatic people who have been in close contact with a COVID-19 KNOWN OR SUSPECTED CASE, OR PEOPLE WHO ARE RETURNING FROM HIGH RISK TRAVEL WHERE COMMUNITY SPREAD IS OCCURRING INCLUDING CRUISE SHIPS, should remain in quarantine for 14 days after the exposure. **If COVID-19 symptoms occur**, these individuals should contact their health care provider immediately, calling ahead **before arrival**.

Health Care Workers may have work-restriction exceptions to this 14 day quarantine rule, as described by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html>), and guided by their employer's COVID-19 occupational health department.

COVID-19 symptoms are defined as: history of subjective fever or objective Temp of 100 degrees F or higher and lower respiratory symptoms such as cough.

Signed,



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