COVID-19 Laboratory Prioritization and Reporting Advisory  
Update #7: Revised Priority Test Submission and Priority Testing Tiers  

April 28, 2020

This provider advisory is issued in collaboration with healthcare partners to assure coordinated prioritized COVID-19 triage and testing instructions. This advisory is updated regularly to reflect changes in testing availability.

Patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and close exposure to another known COVID-19 case should be managed as if they have COVID-19. Consider foregoing testing if it will not alter patient care or disposition.

**Laboratory Testing**

There are two sources of testing for suspect COVID-19 patients:

1. **Public health laboratory** (PHL) testing: Reserved for symptomatic **Tier 1** patients. 
   - Call Disease Control to report you are testing a Tier 1 patient (805) 681-5280.
   - This information will assist with disease control investigations.
   - Send Tier 1 specimens to any of the following:
     - PDL: note on requisition “Priority Tier 1 HCW (or other Tier 1 category)” . Turnaround time is 3 to 30 hours.
     - Other commercial lab: use standard requisition
     - If you require assistance to access testing for a Tier 1 patient, please use requisition form found here: https://publichealthsbc.org/healthcare-professionals/ , and call 805-681-5280. Testing will be facilitated through the Public Health Laboratory.

2. **Commercial laboratory** testing: All other Tiers Use standard requisition process. Turnaround time 1-4 days.

**Reporting Requirements**

- **Tier 1:** Call Disease Control at (805) 681-5280 to report case testing. Enter case into CalREDIE if test is positive
- **Tier 2-4:** Report only positive cases via CalREDIE
- **If you do not have a CalREDIE account and have a positive result call Disease Control at** (805) 681-5280

**Specimen Instruction**

1. All CDC PPE guidance for office staff and providers must be followed for suspect cases
2. Collect respiratory specimen: nasopharyngeal (NP) only
   - Use Dacron swab with plastic stem and regular viral transport media vial
3. Collect sputum only if productive cough is present. Do not induce sputum
   - Use sterile container
4. Keep specimen in refrigerator if unable to send immediately

SEE PAGE TWO FOR PRIORITY TESTING TIERS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tier 1 | - Hospitalized patients  
- Symptomatic healthcare or home care workers  
- Contacts of confirmed cases identified as being in high risk settings by public health investigations  
- Symptomatic staff or residents of congregate living facilities  
  - e.g. jails, shelters, long-term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities |
| Tier 2 | - Symptomatic persons, at provider discretion, priority to those 60 and older with comorbidities  
- Screening of asymptomatic residents of congregate living facilities prior to admission or re-admission to congregate living facility  
  - e.g., a hospitalized patient will be screened for COVID-19 prior to discharge to a congregate living facility  
- Symptomatic persons in essential health and public safety occupations, including first responders and law enforcement |
| Tier 3 | - Symptomatic persons in essential infrastructure occupations  
  - e.g., utility workers, food supply workers, other public employees  
- Screening of asymptomatic healthcare workers  
  - e.g., skilled nursing facility workers, hospital workers |
| Tier 4 | - Community-based testing of all low-risk symptomatic persons  
- Surveillance testing of asymptomatic persons |