



COVID-19 Laboratory Prioritization Advisory and Testing Triage Tool

For Use by Licensed Healthcare Providers and RN's

April 14, 2020

Update #4: Revised to Add Congregate/Home Care Workers to Tier 1 Testing Priority

This provider advisory is issued in collaboration with healthcare partners to assure coordinated prioritized COVID-19 triage and testing instructions. It reflects the need to prioritize patients due to current limited testing availability and shortages of testing supplies. This advisory will be updated regularly.

Patients with symptoms c/w 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 by Tier 1, 2, and 3

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

- **Public health laboratory (PHL) testing:** Limited capacity. Reserved for symptomatic Tier 1 healthcare workers and residential facility patients (ex. SNFs). Requires health officer pre-approval. Turnaround 24-72 hr.
- **Commercial laboratory testing:** Tier 1 patients not included above, Tier 2 and 3 patients as prioritized using the COVID-19 Testing Triage Tool. Turnaround time currently 2-5 days. Health officer approval NOT required.

Suspect Cases Must Be Reported

- **Tier 1:** Call Disease Control at (805) 681-5280, report case, receive PUI # from health officer for PHL testing, enter case into CalREDIE. Request testing supplies if needed.
- **Tier 2 and 3 and other Tier 1:** Report all suspect cases tested by a commercial lab in CalREDIE prior to receiving results.
- **If you do not have a CalREDIE account and are testing a case 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. First rule out other respiratory infections by respiratory panel/and or rapid influenza test. Co-infection is possible.
3. Collect respiratory specimen: nasopharyngeal (NP) only
 - a. Use Dacron swab with plastic stem and regular viral transport media vial
4. Collect sputum only if productive cough is present. Do not induce sputum.
 - a. Use sterile container
5. Keep specimen in refrigerator and call health officer for Tier 1 patients indicated in table below
 - Send specimens for Tier 1 patients with relevant submittal form per health officer instructions
 - Send specimens for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 patients indicated in table below and per commercial lab instructions

Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptomatic residents of congregate living facilities (e.g. jails, shelters, long-term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities), hospitalized or not hospitalized. Call health officer for lab submission. • Symptomatic health care, home care, or congregate living workers, emergency medical services (EMS) and other first responders – call health officer for lab submission or per agency. • Patients who are hospitalized or severely ill, regardless of age or comorbidities-commercial testing advised
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptomatic persons 60 and older with comorbidities, especially those with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, hypertension, immunosuppression and cancer. • Please use the attached COVID-19 Testing Triage Tool. Use commercial testing.
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other patients not included in Tier 1 and Tier 2 as testing capacity and supplies are available • Please use the attached COVID-19 Testing Triage Tool. Use commercial testing.

COVID-19 Testing Criteria- Updated April 9, 2020
Use this tool to prioritize Tier 2 and Tier 3 Level Patients

Reminder: Guidance for Tier 1 Patients

Call health officer in advance for expedited lab submission for the following:

- Symptomatic residents of congregate living facilities (e.g. jails, shelters, long-term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities), hospitalized or not hospitalized.
- Symptomatic health care, congregate living workers, emergency medical services (EMS), other first responders. Call health officer in advance for expedited lab submission or per agency plan.
- Commercial Testing Advised for: Patients who are hospitalized or severely ill, regardless of age or comorbidities

Phone or In-Person Triage Questions	YES	NO*	Points Allotted	Points Earned
Do you have a fever (above 100.4F)?			YES=1	
Do you have a new cough?			YES=1	
Do you have new shortness of breath or pain with taking a deep breath?			YES=1	
Do you have new gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain?			YES=1	
If the answer is NO to all of the above questions, the patient is not a candidate for COVID-19 Testing. If the answer is YES to any of the above, proceed with the next section (below):				
**Have you had close contact with a person with documented COVID-19 infection?			YES=4	
Are you age 60 or older? Age: _____			YES=1	
Do you have any underlying chronic lung disease, such as COPD, fibrosis, etc.?			YES=1	
Do you have any of the following conditions: a. Cancer b. Cerebrovascular disease c. Diabetes d. Chronic cardiac disease e. Other conditions that may lower your immunity (e.g., HIV) or medications that may lower your immunity, such as steroids, immunotherapy, chemotherapy? _____			YES=1	
Patients who score 5 or more points may be candidates for COVID-19 testing if other sources of illness have been ruled out. It will be up to the provider to determine what additional evaluation should be performed prior to COVID testing, but other considerations for an in person assessment include the following: pulse ox, temp., point of care flu testing, CBC, etc. <i>Any patient referred for COVID testing should be wearing a face mask and should be quarantined at home until the test results are known.</i>			TOTAL =	

*NO responses don't earn any points

**Close contact is defined as-being in close proximity (within 6 feet) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time: Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 patient or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case.