



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

February 28, 2020

Dear Colleague:

We are writing today to share important updated guidance about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Updated CDC Guidance on Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Patients Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19

On February 27, 2020, CDC issued updated criteria for PUI, which are available online at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html> and as follows. Note that these criteria are significantly broader than prior criteria, particularly travel-related risk factors.

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including health care workers, 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, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza)	AND	No source of exposure has been identified.

*Affected geographic areas with widespread or sustained community transmission are currently:

- China
- Iran
- Italy
- Japan
- South Korea

Immediately report to your local health department any patients who meet criteria for a PUI for COVID-19, or any patient for whom clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal. If you are unable to immediately reach your local health department, notify the Maryland Department of Health at 410-767-6700 during working hours or at 410-795-7365 after working hours.

If patient does not meet the above PUI criteria, be sure to provide the patient with instructions upon discharge from your facility to minimize risk of transmitting any respiratory infection (including COVID-19) to others by staying home at least until fever-free for at least 24 hours off any fever-reducing medications, and substantially resolving symptoms.

Specimen collection and testing

If the health department approves testing for COVID-19 for a patient, the specimens that will be requested will be:

- Two nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport media
- One oropharyngeal swab in viral transport media
- Serum
- Sputum (if available)

This list of requested specimens is subject to change, and the health department will provide detailed guidance on a case by case basis when testing is approved. At this time, testing for COVID-19 for Maryland residents is still being performed at CDC. If testing is approved, the health department will coordinate with health care providers to arrange transport of specimens first to the MDH laboratory, who will ship the specimen to CDC.

To date, there have been no laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 identified in Maryland. Updated information regarding testing of Maryland residents is posted online at <https://health.maryland.gov/coronavirus>.

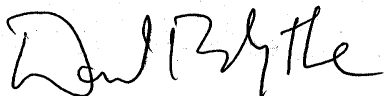
Updated data on U.S. and global cases can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

We will continue to keep you updated as additional information and guidance becomes available.

Sincerely,



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