



County of San Diego

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WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

May 14, 2020

TO: Pharmacies

FROM: Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.,
Public Health Officer & Director,
Public Health Services

RE: COVID-19 PLANNING AND RESPONSE EFFORTS

As health officer for the County of San Diego, I am sending you this communication on behalf of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Public Health Services (PHS) department (local health department). The novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) global outbreak is a unprecedented event, with frequently changing interim guidance documents from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

My last update, in March, provided an overview of County preparedness and response efforts. Just this week, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and California Board of Pharmacy has authorized pharmacists to collect specimens for COVID-19 tests and order tests for consumers to conduct COVID-19 testing. The specimens can be delivered to and processed at public health, university, or commercial labs. A [waiver](#) and [guidance](#) regarding pharmacists ordering and collecting specimens for COVID-19 testing is posted on the [DCA Waivers](#) page. To maximize our understanding of COVID-19 epidemiology and to minimize the transmission of disease within our County and protect our residents, increasing testing access points are vital to mitigate COVID-19. I gratefully appreciate your leadership as your organization considers a potential enhanced role as a testing site. The County stands ready to serve in the capacity to provide testing for specimen's collected at your pharmacy site(s), if needed.

As your organization considers or implements molecular testing for COVID-19, please be aware of the following:

1. CDPH [guidance for pharmacies and pharmacy staff](#) on operations during the COVID-19 pandemic (5/12/2020).
2. PHS Health Alert with recommended molecular testing priority groups ([CAHAN #13](#)).
3. PHS Health Alert on antibody or serology testing, including reporting of results ([CAHAN #14](#)).
4. PHS Health Alert on notification of results to patients, including letting those who test positive know about the Health Officer Order for Isolation, Isolation Instructions, Quarantine Order, and Quarantine Guidance (for close contacts), all of which can be located [here](#) in multiple languages ([CAHAN #11](#)).
5. Hospitals, healthcare providers, and commercial testing laboratories shall report all COVID-19 test results to the Public Health Officer immediately after such results are received ([Health Officer Order, section 8](#)). Please remind the laboratories that you work with, if not the County of San

Diego Public Health Lab, to test your specimens that on March 9, 2020, the list of reportable diseases in [Title 17, California Code of Regulations \(17 CCR\) section 2500](#) was amended to include COVID-19 and Novel coronavirus infections, and [17 CCR section 2505](#) was amended to include SARS-CoV-2 and Coronavirus, novel strains, effective immediately.

I want to thank you for your leadership, action, and partnership. If your employees or patients have questions or concerns related to COVID-19, please encourage them to call 2-1-1 for general information.

For additional information about the outbreak and associated resources, please go to the COVID-19 websites at [CDC](#) and the [County of San Diego](#). These links will provide the latest CDC guidance and local information, respectively. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at MOC.PHO.HHSA@sdcountry.ca.gov

Thank you for your continued partnership and support to keep the residents of San Diego County healthy, safe, and thriving.

Sincerely,


WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.
Public Health Officer & Director
Public Health Services

cc: Helen Robbins-Meyer, County of San Diego, Chief Administrative Officer
Nick Macchione, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Director
Nick Yphantides, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Chief Medical Officer