



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: March 10, 2020

From: Epidemiology and Immunizations Services Branch, Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #4: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

This health advisory updates CAHAN participants about a presumptive positive case in a San Diego County resident and new diagnostic testing options for SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19.

Presumptive Positive Case

On March 9, 2020, the first presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, has been identified by the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (SDCPHL). The information currently available indicates that the case was travel related. This San Diego County resident is being cared for in a medical facility and all precautions are being taken to limit the spread of this infection and to protect the public's health. The County of San Diego Public Health Services immediately initiated the disease investigation, which includes accounting for all potential exposures to the case in the community as well as in any healthcare facility.

Key Points

- Quest and LabCorp are now testing specimens without prior approval from public health.
- San Diego County Public Health Lab (SDCPHL) will continue to test as needed.
- The only specimen accepted at SDCHL is the combined NP and OP swabs in one viral transport media tube (i.e. "two swabs in one tube").

Commercial Laboratory Testing

As of March 9, 2020, testing for SARS-CoV-2 is available through two commercial labs ([Quest](#) and [LabCorp](#)) for ordering by physicians or other authorized healthcare providers anywhere in the U.S. Providers should begin using these commercial laboratories given this update and expanded CDC guidance (see link below).

- These labs can receive specimens for testing **without prior approval** from the County of San Diego public health laboratory.
- Healthcare facilities are responsible for coordinating the transportation of specimens to the commercial labs without the involvement of the County of San Diego Public Health Services (PHS) Epidemiology Program.
- Providers are required to immediately report positive cases per Title 17, Section 2500, as a "novel virus with pandemic potential."

Local Public Health Testing

San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (SDCPHL) will continue to provide SARS-CoV-2 testing for patients with fever and acute lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough and/or shortness of breath) who:

- Have had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Develop symptoms within 14 days of returning from affected geographic areas with widespread or sustained community transmission including China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan
- Have severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza), regardless of travel or exposure history
- Reside at a skilled nursing facility

Following [CDC guidance updated March 9, 2020](#), SDCPHL will now only accept specimens that combine the oropharyngeal and nasopharyngeal swabs into one viral transport media tube (i.e., **“two swabs in one tube”**). Contact the SDCPHL, at 619-692-8500, for guidance on specimen collection and transport.

CDC Guidance for Testing

Providers should utilize their usual infection control and infectious disease resources and protocols, as well as [CDC guidance updated March 8th](#), in evaluating and deciding to test patients for SARS-CoV-2.

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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