

5/6/20

*\* NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

## **COVID-19 Testing Guidance, Letter from Secretary Wiesman, and a Survey Request for SARS CoV2 Testing**

### **Requested Action:**

1. Test all patients with a new onset of symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of their age or health status. COVID-19 patients may present with:
  - Cough, or
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathingOR at least two of:
  - Fever
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore Throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
2. Antibody testing is NOT recommended for diagnostic purposes of symptomatic individuals as they may cross react with ordinary Coronaviruses, so test results are not possible to interpret see: <https://www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/public-health/covid-19/idsa-covid-19-antibody-testing-primer.pdf>
3. Ask symptomatic patients who are tested to:
  - Remain in isolate at home until results are available (see resources below for one-page guidance documents)
  - Practice social distancing, good hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
4. Whether testing patients or not provide them with the following documents so they best know how to prevent the spread
  - Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDcasepositive.pdf>
  - Patients who were exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDexposed.pdf>
  - Unexposed patients with COVID-19 symptoms  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDconcerned.pdf>
5. Report confirmed cases to Thurston County Public Health immediately
6. Inform your patients **we will be contacting them and must complete a case report**
7. Recommend all individuals wear a homemade or surgical mask when within 6 feet of others.
8. Require healthcare workers caring for COVID suspect or positive patients to use droplet precautions, including surgical mask, face shield, gown and gloves. If treatment involves an aerosolizing procedure, they should use a properly fit-tested N95 mask.
9. Consider using Health Care Provider observed, patient self-swab nasal collection for COVID-19 using kits with nasal swabs rather than nasopharyngeal swabs as a way to conserve personal protective equipment see:  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Self-SwabNasalCollectionInstructions.pdf> When sampling from the inner nares, the sample can be collected by the patient and the observer only needs to wear a surgical mask and gloves when handling the specimen.



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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April 29, 2020

Dear Health Care Providers, Lab Directors, and Administrators:

Re: COVID-19 Testing, Tracing, Isolating

In “pandemic time,” I write to ask for your urgent help to control COVID-19.

To prepare to reverse engineer COVID-19 community mitigation measures, the public health system is working quickly to rebuild, surge, and strengthen case and contact investigations so we can rapidly isolate cases and quarantine contacts. We believe full discovery of COVID-19 cases and timely contact tracing is essential to suppress transmission in the community and avoid a rebound in COVID-19 activity.

As we strengthen our system, we ask your help to:

**Test ALL patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, including young and healthy patients**

1. See new [testing guidance](#) from the Department of Health for more information. If you do not have PPE, contact your [local emergency management agency](#) to request and receive these items. If you represent a Tribal Nation or a Local Health Jurisdiction, testing specimen collection supplies can be ordered using the [Specimen Collection Request Portal](#).
2. Ensure that 100 percent of your COVID-19 lab samples are submitted with the patient’s address as well as contact information (phone and email). More than 55 percent of lab results are submitted to us with incomplete or missing contact information, which greatly delays our public health work and limits our ability to suppress transmission of COVID-19. Per [WAC 246-101-105](#), when ordering a lab test for a notifiable condition, health care providers must provide the lab with the patient name, patient address including zip code, and patient date of birth. [WAC 246-101-225](#) authorizes public health officials to require other information of public health value, such as a patient phone number and email address. Your compliance will help all of us keep people safe and save lives. [Small things in this response can make a huge difference](#).
3. Provide all patients you test for COVID-19 with the following information sheets and counsel them to a) isolate themselves while waiting for their test results and b) quarantine their other household members:
  - [What to do if you have confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
  - [What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease \(COVID\)](#)



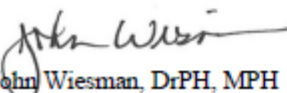
Health Care Providers, Lab Directors, and Administrators  
April 29, 2020  
Page 2

- [What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19](#)

As we retool our system, we will soon ask health care providers to have all patients tested for COVID-19 to complete an electronic patient demographic and contact information form so we can get a head start if the patient tests positive.

Our success as a state relies upon our tightly coordinated efforts, and we appreciate your help.

Respectfully,

  
John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH  
Secretary of Health

You can find a copy of Dr Wiesman's letter with clickable links at our Providers page:  
<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/Pages/covid-19-resources-healthcare.aspx>

**SARS CoV 2 Testing Survey and Future Considerations**

Public Health - Seattle & King County and the Washington State Department of Health are asking healthcare providers to complete a survey to better understand access and barriers to SARS-CoV-2 testing in our communities. This survey is meant only for licensed practicing professionals who might order SARS -CoV-2 PCR testing for their patients. We would appreciate it if you would take the time to answer the survey as it will assist us in understanding what we need to do to increase testing across the state. You can find the survey at: <https://redcap.ihts.org/surveys/?s=FX8ATA7XLC> if you need the survey in a print format contact Jeanie Knight at [knightj@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:knightj@co.thurston.wa.us) and she will email a copy to you.

**Background**

The virus causing COVID-19, emerged in December 2019 and has caused a global pandemic. Eighty percent of cases are reported to be mild, but severe disease and deaths are more common in the elderly (older than 60 years) and in those with underlying health conditions. As of May 5th, there were 15,900 confirmed cases and 893 deaths in Washington State, 114 confirmed cases and 1 death in Thurston County and 1,171,510 confirmed cases and 68,279 deaths in the US and territories.

Thank you, for all you are doing to lessen the impact COVID-19 is having on our community and to flatten the curve.

**Resources:**

DOH one page patient guidance under "Materials for patients" for stopping spread, isolating and quarantining:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020COVID19/HealthcareProviders>

CDC Infection Prevention and Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UPDATE

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SECTION  
 THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
 412 LILLY RD NE  
 OLYMPIA, WA, 98506-5132  
 DISEASE REPORTING: (360)786-5470  
 Diana Yu, MD, MSPH, Acting Health Officer



- CDC Guidelines for collecting, handling, and testing clinical specimens:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>
- CDC COVID-19 Evaluation and testing - [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Fidentify-assess-flowchart.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Fidentify-assess-flowchart.html)
- CDC Health care Professionals Guidance - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>
- DOH - Provider guidance on testing:  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Interim-2019NovelCoronavirusQuicksheetProviders.pdf>
- DOH – Specimen Collection and Submission:  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5240/SCSI-2019-nCoV.pdf>
- DOH – Healthcare Provider Guidance:  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/HealthcareProviders>
- Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department Health Care Provider Page:  
<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/Pages/covid-19-resources-healthcare.aspx>
- Infectious Disease Society of America, COVID-19 Antibody Testing Primer -  
<https://www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/public-health/covid-19/idsa-covid-19-antibody-testing-primer.pdf>

## THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting <b>non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day)</b>	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
<b>Day time immediately reportable conditions</b> – Call detailed information to the 24-hour Notifiable Condition Reporting Line at 360-786-5470. Messages are picked up hourly. If a call back can't wait call 360-867-2500 and ask staff to locate a Communicable Disease staff.	Phone: 360-786-5470
<b>After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is <b>immediately notifiable</b>	1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: <http://bit.ly/CDUpdatePHSS>