



COUNTY OF IMPERIAL

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

March 6, 2020

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance

The situation regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is rapidly changing in California and elsewhere in the United States. In California, there are more than 70 confirmed cases, including one death, with additional presumptive positive cases pending confirmation by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). At this time, there are no presumptive or confirmed cases in Imperial County.

On March 5, 2020, Imperial County Health Officer Stephen Munday, M.D issued a declaration of a local health emergency, and the County of Imperial issued a proclamation of a local emergency. These actions allow local jurisdictions and health-care facilities to request necessary support from local, regional, state, and federal agencies, and ensure that all response partners have the necessary tools at their disposal to respond to this evolving threat.

The CDC updated the [criteria](#) for evaluation of persons under investigation (PUI) to a wider group of symptomatic patients.

The CDC recommends that clinicians use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and requires testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 developed fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (cough, difficulty breathing). Clinicians are strongly encouraged to test for other causes of respiratory illness, including infections such as influenza and RSV.

As availability of diagnostic testing for COVID-19 increases, clinicians will be able to access laboratory tests for diagnosing COVID-19 through clinical laboratories performing tests

authorized by FDA under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Clinicians also are able to access laboratory testing through a state or local Public Health laboratory.

At this time, given limited capacity and no documented cases or community spread in Imperial County, testing at Public Health labs is available for patients with fever and acute respiratory illness who:

- Have had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- Develop symptoms within 14 days of returning from affected areas with widespread or sustained community transmission including China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan. CDC defines relevant affected areas as locations with at least a CDC level 2 Travel Health Notice. See all COVID-19 [Travel Health Notices](#).
- Have severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and with no alternative explanatory diagnosis, regardless of travel or exposure history.

Health-care providers who want to obtain testing through a Public Health laboratory should:

- Conduct a thorough medical evaluation of potential cases using appropriate infection control precautions. Standard respiratory pathogen testing, especially influenza testing, and chest radiographs should be conducted as clinically indicated.
- Use the standard infection control and infectious disease resources and protocols to determine that the patient meets the criteria listed above.
- Collect nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs and place in separate viral transport media containers with the specimen source documented on the label. Complete the [CDC PUI form](#). The Health Department courier will pick up specimens.
- Contact County Epidemiology by calling (442) 265-1464 during regular working hours if you have questions or need guidance.

Reporting COVID-19 cases and SARS-CoV-2 virus by health-care providers and laboratories, respectively, is now mandatory. Providers can report using the [Confidential Morbidity Report](#)

and faxing to the Epidemiology section at (442) 265-1477 or via CalREDIE, the statewide electronic disease reporting system.

For the most up-to-date information, health-care providers should monitor the [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 website](#).

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