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Please copy and distribute to ALL physicians at your location.

**Guidance on laboratory testing for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
in Ventura County**

As of this week, in addition to the Ventura County Public Health Laboratory (VCPHL), Quest Laboratories are able to provide testing for COVID-19. In the next week, it is expected additional commercial laboratories, LabCorp and ARUP, will make COVID-19 testing available. The following guidance is intended to provide clarification for when testing should be done.

Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing). This is a reportable disease, so ALL suspect cases with COVID-19 testing pending MUST report by Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) by fax to 805-981-5200 immediately.

You must contact the VCPH Communicable Disease Office at 805-981-5201 prior to specimen collection for patient testing at the VCPH Laboratory.

Criteria for testing at VCPHL:

- Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 AND a negative flu study.
- Any persons including healthcare personnel, who within 14 days of symptom onset had close contact, i.e. been within 6' of a suspect or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient for a prolonged period or had direct contact with the respiratory secretions of a COVID-19 patient without wearing adequate PPE, or who have a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of their symptom onset. Current affected geographic areas include China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea.

If you suspect a patient has COVID-19, you must find ways to provide care. Patients must NOT be sent to public health as VCPH has no capacity for patient care beyond tuberculosis and immunizations. Patients who you suspect may have COVID-19, but do not fit the above description should be tested at one of the commercial laboratories. These patients should include other symptomatic individuals such as, older adults (age \geq 65 years) and individuals with chronic medical conditions and/or an immunocompromised state that may put them at higher risk for poor outcomes (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, receiving immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease).

For further information see the attached CDC Guidance, Updated Guidance on Evaluating and Testing Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). 8 March 2020. <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2020/han00429.asp>.

This bulletin is intended to improve the public health in our county by keeping physicians and nurses informed of noteworthy diagnoses, disease trends and other events of medical interest. Another goal of a public health department is to educate. We hope that you will use this information to increase your awareness. Please allow us to continue in our role of speaking to the press so that we may maximize the educational message to the benefit of all citizens of Ventura County.

Communicable Disease Office

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