



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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**MEMORANDUM**

Date: March 18, 2020

To: Health Care Providers

From: Joneigh Khaldun, MD, MPH, FACEP  
Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy for Health  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

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Thank you for continued support in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This letter is intended to provide guidance about collection and testing of specimens for COVID-19 in Michigan, including public health coordination of specimen testing in laboratories. With evidence of community spread in Michigan and across the country, it is essential public health and healthcare partner to prioritize specimen collection and testing for those at highest risk of impacting the public's health and health care systems.

Due to shortage of collection kits, sample media and laboratory capacity, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has worked with local public health and hospitals to created prioritization criteria for use of this valuable resource. It is essential to collect and test specimens of greatest public health significance to drive and inform infection prevention and control and community mitigation. Current criteria\* include:

1. Individuals presenting with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 infection who are identified as a known contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 Infection and are not members of the same household or congregate living situation as the confirmed case (unless as part of a public health investigation).
2. Individuals who become symptomatic while being in a 14-day monitoring and quarantine period (such as, but not limited to, monitoring due to travel from a region with widespread transmission).
3. Symptomatic individuals who are part of a public health investigation of a cluster of illness associated with a vulnerable population (e.g., long term care facility).
4. Symptomatic individuals who may be more likely to infect many of people or a vulnerable population (e.g., healthcare providers and those living in congregate settings like dorms, camps, long term care facilities).
5. Individuals presenting with severe illness requiring hospitalization and having no other identified etiology.

\* This will be adjusted as the COVID-19 epidemic evolves and information needs change.

In recognition of the challenges experienced in testing for COVID-19, the MDHHS has developed the Michigan COVID-19 Laboratory Emergency Response Network (MI-CLERN). The purpose is to optimize statewide testing of COVID samples to support the local, state, and federal public health and healthcare response. MI-CLERN represents a collaboration of the MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories, Michigan's hospitals, and the private laboratory sector supported by local and state public health with full alignment with evolving federal testing initiative. Key features of MI-CLERN include:

- Statewide uniform, dynamic, epidemiologically driven prioritization of testing
- Expansion of state, hospital, and community-based laboratory testing
  - Streamline of approval for hospital laboratories via MDHHS BOL
  - Regional coordination to optimize epidemiologically valuable testing
- Central 24-hour testing referral telephone line exclusively for Michigan clinicians
- Rapid delivery of test results through Michigan Disease Surveillance System, coordinating with evolving federal system
- Full integration with evolving federal COVID-19 Public Health and Community Testing efforts

The central 24-hour testing referral telephone line (888-277-9894) will go live 08:00 on Thursday 3/19/2020. Clinicians should call this number to have the patient's symptoms and risk factors assessed against the prioritization criteria. If the patient meets criteria, MDHHS will provide instructions for obtaining laboratory testing.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now allows for collection of a single Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for testing. Local health departments do not currently have the capacity to collect samples from patients.
- Due to the shortage of viral transport media, it is permissible to aseptically divide 3 mL of media into three 1 mL containers.
- As Dacron swabs essential for collection are in short supply, we are asking all healthcare providers to immediately suspend sampling efforts the except for patients determined to meet high priority criteria
- The completed Patient Under Investigation (PUI) form ([https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/MDHHS\\_CDC\\_PUI\\_Form\\_and\\_Cover\\_Sheet\\_Filable\\_v02.03.2020\\_680230\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/MDHHS_CDC_PUI_Form_and_Cover_Sheet_Filable_v02.03.2020_680230_7.pdf)) should be faxed to your local health department (see attached list).
- The MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) will only test specimens for COVID-19 that have a PUI number on the requisition form.

Limiting the impact of COVID-19 on the health and well-being of Michiganders requires collaboration and resources in all sectors. We need our entire healthcare system to pull together to create a unity of effort that will ultimately benefit our healthcare system, and most importantly our citizens. For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus). You may also email our Community Health Emergency Coordination Center at: [checcdeptcoor@michigan.gov](mailto:checcdeptcoor@michigan.gov).