



Public Health

Idaho North Central District



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Physician's ALERT...

March 2, 2020

Health Advisory for Idaho Healthcare Providers on Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Update

Situation Overview

In the United States, presumptive or confirmed COVID-19 cases likely from community spread have been reported from Washington, Oregon, and California. The World Health Organization raised the global risk assessment to very high.

Current Recommendations for Idaho Healthcare Providers:

- **Obtain detailed travel history on patients with fever and acute respiratory illness;** note the geographic areas currently affected by the outbreak with widespread or sustained community transmission are listed at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>.
- **Report patients with possible COVID-19 to Public Health - Idaho North Central District (208-799-3100) or the Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention Epidemiology Section (208-334-5939) and infection control personnel in your facility immediately.** The criteria for Persons Under Investigation (PUI) has been broadened to include recent travel from affected geographic areas outside China (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019/clinical-criteria.html>). Clinical features have also been revised. Consider COVID-19 in patients with severe respiratory illness even in the absence of travel history to affected areas or known exposure to another case.
- **Take appropriate precautions to protect yourself and your staff** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>).
- **Consult with your public health district or the Division of Public Health Epidemiology Section before collecting specimens for COVID-19 testing.** Rapid testing for influenza and other respiratory viruses should be considered. For COVID-19 testing, collect nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs and sputum (if possible without induction) regardless of time of symptom onset. Contact the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) at 208-334-2235 or see their website (<https://statelab.idaho.gov>) for instructions on specimen collection and submission. IBL requires public health approval before testing. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>.
- **Current commercial nucleic acid based tests do not detect the virus that causes COVID-19.** Advise patients that positive human coronavirus (HKU1, NL63, 229E, and OC4) test results indicate infection with common seasonal human coronaviruses but **not** the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Additional resources:

- CDC COVID-19 for healthcare: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>
- Idaho Department of Health & Welfare: <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/COVID19>
- [Idaho advisory on N95 respirators](#)