DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

COUNTY OF MARIN

MARIN HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Health, Well-being & Safety

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PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

March 11, 2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Dear Colleagues:

Current Situation

As of March 10, 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has confirmed 133 cases of COVID-19 among California residents (50 travel-related; 30 person-to-person transmission; 29 community acquired; and 24 unknown sources).

This week, Marin County's regional public health laboratory as well as LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics began offering COVID-19 testing. These laboratories are not collecting specimens. Specimens need to be collected at health care facilities that have staff trained in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) infection prevention and control recommendations. As of March 10, 2020, the CDC continues to recommend airborne, droplet, and contact precautions for healthcare personnel in close contact with patients under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. Marin County Public Health is now offering field-based COVID-19 testing for Marin County residents who meet testing criteria (see below).

On March 4, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated clinical criteria for patients under investigation (PUI). Marin County Public Health is not recommending testing individuals with mild respiratory illness with no known exposure to COVID-19. Currently, Marin County Public Health recommends testing for:
1. Symptomatic patients (includes health care workers) who have had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient or a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of symptom onset;
2. Patients with moderate respiratory illness, subjective or objective fevers, and one or more clinical findings of respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, or hypoxia) who do not respond to initial therapy and/or who do not have an alternative explanatory diagnosis; and,
3. Patients with severe respiratory illness requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza).

Health care providers can refer non-acute patients meeting testing criteria to Marin County Public Health for field-based COVID-19 testing. Providers who refer nonhospitalized patients for COVID-19 testing must review Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Homes and Residential Communities with patients and families prior to testing. Providers can refer suspect COVID-19 patients for fieldbased testing by submitting patient information through our COVID-19 Provider Reporting and Testing form and contacting Marin County Public Health by phone

(415 473 4163) during regular business hours to coordinate testing. Language translation services will be available, if necessary.

Actions requested of providers

1. Participate in Marin County Public Health's weekly COVID-19 update conference calls. Please email MHOAC@marincounty.org for more information.
2. Prepare for the possible arrival of patients with COVID-19 by reviewing and implementing CDC-recommended infection control recommendations Healthcare Professional Preparedness Checklist For Transport and Arrival of Patients With Confirmed or Possible COVID-19.
     • All health care facilities should immediately put a surgical mask on patients being evaluated for fever and/or respiratory symptoms; promptly place patients in private rooms; and have healthcare personnel wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for patients.
3. All health care providers (incl. Emergency Departments) must immediately report suspected cases to Marin County Public Health by completing the following COVID-19 Provider Reporting and Testing form.
4. Health care providers can refer non-acute patients meeting testing criteria to Marin County Public Health for field-based COVID-19 testing. Contact Marin County Public Health at 415 473 4163 to coordinate testing.
5. Marin County Emergency Department providers that identify patients who meet criteria for COVID-19 testing can collect specimens and send to LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics for testing. Emergency health care providers should follow hospital policy re: Infectious Disease consultations prior to testing.
     a. Marin County Public Health should be added to COVID-19 laboratory requisition forms (415 473 4163 P; 415 473 6002 F; marinCD@marincounty.org).
     b. The CDC has updated specimen guidelines to allow combining NP and OP swabs at collection into a single vial to extend testing capacity.
6. Obtain a detailed travel history for patients being evaluated for fever and acute respiratory illness. Review COVID-19 Travel Health Notices to determine if patient has travelled to a geographic area of concern.
7. Reinforce basic infection control measures including handwashing, proper cough hygiene, social distancing when sick, and avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
8. Prescribe influenza vaccination.
9. Encourage patients to prepare for possible outbreak by ensuring they have an adequate supply of essential medicines; preparing a child care plan if childcare is not available (including school closures); and staying up-to-date with trusted resources (e.g., CDC).
10. Patients seeking guidance regarding travel plans should be made aware of the possibility of new travel restrictions and risk should they travel abroad and should be guided to the CDC website for the latest travel advisories.

Sincerely,

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Marin HHS: https://www.marinhhs.org/coronavirus-health-care-providers