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## NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN)

### ADVISORY

#### New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) updates healthcare providers on testing criteria for COVID-19

March 6, 2020

##### Key Points

- While to date 99 cases of COVID-19 have been identified in the United States, with an additional 49 cases in Americans repatriated to the U.S. by the federal government, we still have no confirmed cases in New Mexico.
- We are expanding testing availability to all persons with respiratory symptoms (e.g. fever and cough/shortness of breath) who test negative for influenza regardless of travel history or contact with confirmed cases.
- COVID-19 testing is now available at the NMDOH Scientific Laboratory Division (SLD), but must be approved by NMDOH. **To coordinate testing of patients that fit the criteria below, please contact the New Mexico Department of Health at 505-827-0006.**

In light of the emerging coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), we understand that you may have questions and seek guidance for how to assess patients with or without recent travel history to countries with current COVID-19 transmission. Because this is a rapidly changing situation, we recommend that you regularly check the CDC websites on [COVID-19](#) and [Traveler Information](#) for the latest information. We ask that you forward this alert to your colleagues and advise them to subscribe to the New Mexico Health Alert Network to receive public health alerts on COVID-19 detection and infection prevention.

##### How to sign up for the New Mexico Health Alert Network (HAN)

To register for the HAN:

Open <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085613008> and click on the blue 'Sign up' link and provide all of the information on each page until you click on the 'Finish' button.

To contact HAN:

Email: [han.helpdesk@state.nm.us](mailto:han.helpdesk@state.nm.us)

Phone: (505) 476-8210

##### EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

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**COVID-19 Testing Criteria as of March 6, 2020**

	<b>Clinical Features</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Epidemiologic Risk</b>	<b>Testing</b>	<b>Specimens</b>	<b>PPE</b>
<b>High Risk</b>	<b>Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)</b>	<b>AND</b>	Any person, including healthcare workers who has had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset	YES	NP <b>and</b> OP swab, sputum if productive cough (do not induce sputum)	Airborne, droplet and contact precautions
	<b>Fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)</b>	<b>AND</b>	A history of travel from areas with sustained transmission (Level 3 countries) within 14 days of symptom onset	YES	NP <b>and</b> OP swab, sputum if productive cough (do not induce sputum)	Airborne, droplet and contact precautions
<b>Moderate Risk</b>	<b>Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization without alternative diagnosis (e.g. influenza)</b>	<b>AND</b>	No source of exposure identified	YES	NP <b>and</b> OP swab, <b>and</b> lower respiratory tract specimen (sputum or BAL)	Airborne, droplet and contact precautions
<b>Low Risk</b>	<b>Fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) with negative influenza test and/or negative PCR respiratory panel</b>	<b>AND</b>	No source of exposure identified	YES surveillance purposes	NP <b>and</b> OP swab	Droplet precautions (face mask, eye protection, gloves) hand hygiene

High risk and Moderate risk: notify NMDOH immediately at 505-827-0006

Affected areas are defined as geographic regions where sustained community transmission has been identified. Relevant affected areas will be defined as a country with a CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice Level 3 travel warnings as of 3/6/2020 China, South Korea, Italy and Iran.

NP/OP swab: Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing. Place swabs immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media or universal transport media. NP and OP specimens should be kept in separate vials. Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C and ship overnight.

**If you have a patient who meets the criteria above contact the New Mexico Department of Health at 505-827-0006**

### **People at higher risk and special populations**

Some individuals seem to be at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. These individuals include older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease. We are particularly concerned about high risk patients in long term care facilities and encourage testing of any residents with symptoms of influenza like illness or COVID-19.

For more information, consult the [CDC guidance for high risk individuals](#) and [CDC guidance for long term care facilities](#)

Please consult the CDC websites on [COVID-19](#) and [Traveler Information](#) for the most up to date information. Please call NMDOH at 505-827-0006 if you have any questions.

### **Resources**

- [New Mexico Department of Health COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#)
- **New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the New Mexico Health Alert Network, go to <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085613008#/login> and click “Sign Up” at the bottom of the page. Provide all information on each screen, click on “Save and Continue,” and click on “Finish” at the end to begin receiving important health alerts and advisories.