

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

URGENT HEALTH BULLETIN

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Update for Healthcare Providers

This document contains hyperlinks and can be accessed on our
[Health Bulletin webpage \(https://kernpublichealth.com/health-bulletin/\)](https://kernpublichealth.com/health-bulletin/) or on the
[COVID-19 webpage \(https://kernpublichealth.com/2019-novel-coronavirus/\)](https://kernpublichealth.com/2019-novel-coronavirus/)

March 1, 2020

Dear Kern County Healthcare Provider:

To date, there have been no confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19, formerly 2019-nCoV) in Kern County. Healthcare providers should remain prepared to assess and care for potential COVID-19 patients. There continue to be more cases identified in California and the United States. Recently, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported cases of community-based transmission, as well as the first COVID-19 case identified in a healthcare worker in the United States.

To ensure your facility is fully prepared to respond to COVID-19, please disseminate pertinent information to all staff, including non-medical/non-clinical staff. Previous bulletins regarding COVID-19 include [2019 Novel Coronavirus Guidance for Healthcare Providers](#) and [Additional Guidance for Healthcare Providers and FAQs](#).

Healthcare providers should continue follow the CDC's [Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#). As concerns regarding limited PPE have been raised, healthcare providers should be familiar with CDC's [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#). Remember that facemasks are only one piece of the recommended PPE; the entire ensemble of gloves, gown, respirator, and eye protection is essential to reducing the risk of transmission from patient to healthcare worker.

On February 27, 2020, CDC updated the [Criteria to Guide Evaluation for Persons Under Investigation \(PUI\)](#).

Epidemiologic Risk Factor	And	Clinical Features
Any person, including healthcare workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset	&	Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)
A history of travel from affected geographic areas* within 14 days of symptoms onset	&	Fever <u>and</u> signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization
No source of exposure has been identified	&	Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g. pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g. influenza)

*Affected areas may change rapidly. Please refer the online [PUI guidance](#) and [Travel](#) webpages for up-to-date information regarding affected areas.

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Report all suspected cases of COVID-19 to the Kern County Public Health Services Department (KCPHSD) immediately by phone. During regular business hours, call 661-321-3000. After hours, on weekends, and holidays, call 661-324-6551 and ask to be connected to Public Health On Call.

The [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH) is now accepting specimens for COVID-19 testing. All local requests for COVID-19 testing are still facilitated by KCPHSD.

- Specimens are to be sent to the Kern County Public Health Lab for appropriate packaging and handling. Facilities should NOT send specimens directly to CDPH or CDC.
- Specimens are to be collected at the facility where the patient is evaluated. Do not send patients to the Public Health Department Clinic for specimen collection.
- [Specimens for testing](#) include nasopharyngeal (NP) swab and oropharyngeal (OP) swab, each in separate transport media. Sputum is also to be collected on patients with a productive cough. Do NOT induce sputum production if the patient cannot produce a specimen on his/her own. Serum, stool, and urine are not being tested at this time. Contact KCPHSD prior to specimen collection.

Test kits are limited throughout the United States. Healthcare providers are asked to be judicious in requesting COVID-19 testing.

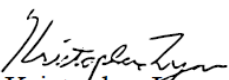
All healthcare facilities should prepare for surges, review their surge plans, and review all options to free up patient beds. This may include cancelling elective surgeries and expediting discharges. Ensure that staff are adequately trained on appropriate PPE and appropriate donning and doffing.

Administrators of healthcare facilities should also be familiar with CDC's [Interim Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with COVID-19](#). Healthcare workers exposed to a potential COVID-19 case require close follow up and may need to be excluded from work. Administrators should evaluate how exposure to a COVID-19 case would affect the facility's workforce and prepare appropriately.

The situation regarding COVID-19 continues to evolve both in the U.S. and abroad. Interim guidance and recommendations are subject to change as more and more information becomes available. For the most up to date information, please refer to the [CDC website](#) and the [CDPH website](#).

If you have any questions, please contact KCPHSD by phone at 661-321-3000, via email at publichealth@kerncounty.com, or visit our [website](#).

Thank you,


Kristopher Lyon, MD
Health Officer