

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

## URGENT HEALTH BULLETIN

### 2019 Novel Coronavirus Guidance for Healthcare Providers

This bulletin contains hyperlinks and can be accessed on our [website](https://kernpublichealth.com/health-bulletin/) (<https://kernpublichealth.com/health-bulletin/>)

January 27, 2020

Dear Kern County Health Care Provider:

A cluster of pneumonia cases, later identified as 2019 novel coronavirus (nCoV), was reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Since then, more than a thousand cases of nCoV have been identified in China and [multiple other countries](#). To date, five cases have been identified in the United States among recent travelers to Wuhan, including [two cases in California](#). A case was confirmed in Orange County on January 25, 2020 and another in Los Angeles County on January 26, 2020. Kern County healthcare providers are urged to be prepared to assess patients for this emerging infection.

**To ensure your facility is able to implement appropriate infection control measures, please disseminate pertinent information regarding nCoV to all medical staff, as well as non-clinical staff who make initial contact with patients.**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released multiple documents including [Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#), [Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#), and [Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care for People Not Requiring Hospitalization for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#). The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) also issued an [All Facilities Letter \(AFL\)](#) regarding nCoV on January 23, 2020.

Recommendations for nCoV include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Assess travel history.** Since nCoV infection may present with symptoms common during the influenza season (fever and lower respiratory symptoms), a history of travel to Wuhan, China or a close contact with a confirmed case of nCoV within 14 days should prompt healthcare providers to consider nCoV. Signs are available on the CDPH website in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Mandarin](#).
- **Isolate immediately.** Patients suspected of nCoV should immediately be isolated in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR) or negative pressure room. If an AIIR is not available, the patient should be masked and placed in a single occupancy room with the door kept closed.
- **Report to Public Health.** Contact the Kern County Public Health Services Department (KCPHSD) by phone at (661) 321-3000 during regular business hours. After hours, on weekends, and holidays, call (661) 324-6551 and asked to be connected to Public Health Staff On Call.
- **Use Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).** While assessing a patient for nCoV, healthcare workers should adhere to standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions and eye protection. This includes gloves, gown, mask (N-95 or greater protection), and goggles or face shield. Additional respiratory protection (such as a powered air purifying respirator [PAPR] with a high efficiency particulate air [HEPA] filter) is recommended when aerosol-generating procedures are performed.

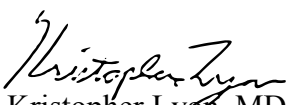
- **Collect Specimens for Testing.** PCR testing for nCoV is currently only available through CDC; existing commercial tests for other types of coronavirus have not been shown to identify nor rule out nCoV. All testing for nCoV must be requested through KCPHSD and approved by CDPH and CDC. Specimens for testing include upper respiratory tract specimens (nasal pharyngeal swab and oropharyngeal swab), lower respiratory tract specimens (sputum, tracheal aspirate or bronchoalveolar lavage), serum, urine, and stool. Contact KCPHSD for more details about specimen collection and transport.
- **Consult with Public Health Prior to Discharge.** Patients with suspected or confirmed nCoV infection whose symptoms do not require admission to an acute care facility may be discharged home after approval from KCPHSD. A discharge plan may be required from the facility to ensure the home setting is appropriate for limiting the risk of transmission to others and that the patient and/or caregiver(s) have been educated about reducing the risk of transmission, monitoring for additional symptoms, and whom to contact if medical care is needed. Information including the [Interim Guidance for Preventing 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) from Spreading to Others in Homes and Communities](#) should be provided to the patient and/or caregiver(s) prior to discharge.

Please be reminded that this is a rapidly evolving situation. Interim guidance and recommendations are subject to change as more information regarding nCoV becomes available. For the most up to date information, please refer to the [CDC website](#) and the [CDPH website](#).

Additional resources include [Guideline for Isolation Precautions, Healthcare Professional Preparedness Checklist for Transport and Arrival of Patients Potentially Infected with 2019-nCoV](#), [Hospital Preparedness Checklist for Suspected or Confirmed 2019-nCoV Patients](#), and the World Health Organization's [Infection Prevention and Control During Health Care When Novel Coronavirus \(nCoV\) Infection is Suspected](#).

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

Thank you,

  
Kristopher Lyon, MD  
Health Officer