

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

## URGENT HEALTH BULLETIN

### **Risk Assessment and Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Clarification and Additional Testing Options Now Available**

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 12, 2020

Dear Kern County Healthcare Provider:

To date, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Kern County. All healthcare facilities and their personnel should remain prepared to assess and care for potential COVID-19 patients. This includes, but is not limited to, inpatient settings, outpatient settings, long-term care, and medical transport.

**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](#), [Additional Guidance for Healthcare Providers and FAQs](#), and [COVID-19 Update for Healthcare Providers](#).

Healthcare providers should continue follow the CDC's [Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#). On March 7, 2020, CDC updated the [Interim Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with COVID-19](#). To clarify some of these recommendations:

- If at any time, healthcare personnel (HCP) develop symptoms of any communicable disease including COVID-19, they are to be immediately excluded from work.
- Immediately following a determination to test a patient for COVID-19, HCP should be assessed for exposure risk based on CDC's [Risk Classification \(Table 1\)](#).
- Asymptomatic exposed HCP may continue to work until 72 hours after initial exposure to the patient. During this time, exposed HCP are to be monitored for symptoms.
- If the patient tests positive for COVID-19 or results are not received within 72 hour after initial exposure:
  - any HCP assessed to have a high- or medium-risk exposure are to be excluded from work until 14 days after the last exposure.
  - any HCP assessed to have a low-risk exposure may continue to work while monitoring for symptoms.
- If the patient tests negative for COVID-19 on all specimens, the work restrictions and monitoring may be lifted. A laboratory result does not conclusively rule out disease so consideration of clinical correlation is recommended prior to terminating work restrictions or monitoring.

March 11, 2020

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HCP who may have been exposed outside of the healthcare setting (travel or personal contact) should be assessed according to CDC's [guidance for the geographic risk and confirmed case exposures](#). Any person with high- or medium-risk exposures should be excluded from work in the healthcare setting until 14 days after their last potential exposure.

CDC's guidance for assessing HCP also includes additional considerations for areas with community transmission of COVID-19. These include allowing asymptomatic healthcare providers to continue working while wearing a facemask, self-monitoring for symptoms, and immediately ceasing work should even mild symptoms occur. Currently, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Kern County. We encourage facilities to take all necessary steps to reduce the risk of potential healthcare-associated exposures while balancing the need for adequate staffing.

### **Additional Laboratory Testing Capacity**

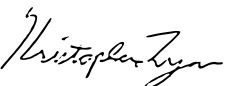
[Quest Diagnostics](#), [LabCorp](#), and [ARUP](#) have begun accepting specimens for COVID-19 testing. Additional commercial labs may also begin testing soon. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory continues to accept specimens through the Kern County Public Health Services Department (KCPHSD).

COVID-19 meets the definition of a novel virus infection with pandemic potential. Therefore, per California Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 2500, any patient that is suspected of or is being tested for COVID-19 is required to be reported immediately by phone to KCPHSD, regardless of which laboratory is performing the testing. To report COVID-19, call 661-321-3000 during regular business hours and 661-324-6551 after hours, on weekends, and holidays. The required [Person Under Investigation](#) form can be faxed to 661-868-0261.

The situation regarding COVID-19 continues to evolve in California, the U.S., and around the world. 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](mailto:publichealth@kerncounty.com), or visit our [KCPHSD website](#).

Thank you,



Kristopher Lyon, MD  
Health Officer