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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak, Update # 13 ***NH DHHS Announces New Specimen Collection Stations for COVID-19 Testing*** ***and*** ***New Information on COVID-19 Serology Testing***

Key Points and Recommendations:

- To increase access to COVID-19 testing, the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has established five new drive-through locations where patients can have nasopharyngeal swabs collected for COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing.
- These new specimen collection stations are open 7-days per week from 11am – 7pm and are located in:
 - **Lancaster:** 350 Meadow St., Lancaster, NH 03743
 - **Plymouth:** 7 Armory Rd., Plymouth, NH 03264
 - **Tamworth (DMV):** 1864 White Mountain Highway, Tamworth, NH 03886
 - **Claremont (middle school):** 107 South St., Claremont, NH 03743
 - **Rochester:** 106 Brock St., Rochester, NH 03867
- You can order testing for any patient with COVID-19 symptoms (see below) at one of these stations by sending in a completed [test requisition form](#) to the NH DHHS COVID-19 Coordinating Office via fax (603-271-3001) or email (covidtesting@dhhs.nh.gov).
 - The NH DHHS COVID-19 Coordinating Office will then call the patient directly to schedule an appointment at one of these stations.
 - If a patient is unable to drive to one of the stations due to a disability or physical barrier, NH DHHS will schedule a visiting nurses association (VNA) to go to the patient's home to collect the specimen.
- Patients without a primary care provider can call 2-1-1 to be assessed for COVID-19 testing at these new stations under a standing order.
- Facilities (e.g., long term care facilities, assisted-living facilities, residential homes, etc.) with concern about active COVID-19 transmission can request testing for staff and residents by calling the NH DHHS COVID-19 Coordinating Office at 603-271-5980.
- Antibody-based tests are now available through commercial laboratories for the detection of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. Providers should review the [COVID-19 Antibody Testing Primer](#) from the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA), and information released by Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security about [serology-based tests for COVID-19](#).
 - Do not use antibody-based tests to diagnose acute infection. It can take ~2 weeks after infection for antibodies to be detectable. If a patient is symptomatic, [collect an upper respiratory tract specimen](#) for testing by PCR.

- Become acquainted with the test characteristics of the various antibody tests, noting the possibility of false-negative results (especially from use too early following symptoms) and false-positive results (especially from cross-reactivity to commonly circulating coronaviruses).
- A positive antibody test should not be used to make decisions about a person's potential to infect others or their immune status. For example, healthcare workers with positive serology should still use personal protective equipment in the care of suspect or confirmed COVID-19 patients and everybody, including those with a positive antibody test result, need to continue to practice social distancing. We do not know how a positive test, or specific antibody levels, correlate with a person's immunity, and we don't know how long protection may last.
- In partnership with the New Hampshire Health Care Association, we continue weekly calls every **Wednesday** from **12:00 – 1:00 pm** for LTCFs, ALFs, and other congregate settings with vulnerable patients (next call Wednesday, April 29th):
 - Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/511075725>
 - Call-in phone number: (929) 205-6099
 - Meeting ID: 511 075 725
- We continue to host weekly calls every **Thursday** from **12:00 – 1:00 pm** for healthcare providers and local partners (next call Thursday, April 30th):
 - Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/s/94841259025>
 - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
 - Meeting ID: 948 4125 9025
 - Password: 003270

Background:

See our NH COVID-19 website for updated counts and information:
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>

Patients with COVID-19 can present with a wide range of symptoms from mild to severe illness. Symptoms typically appear within 2-14 days after exposure and can include:

- Fever (subjective or documented fever)
- Upper and lower respiratory tract symptoms including rhinorrhea, pharyngitis, cough, chest congestion, or shortness of breath
- Flu-like symptoms including myalgia, chills, and new significant fatigue
- Loss of taste or smell

See our prior HANs related to COVID-19:
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/alerts/han.htm>

Additional Information

- CDC COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - CDC Information for Healthcare Professionals:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>
- World Health Organization COVID-19 website:
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

- For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.
- To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, please send an email to DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov.

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From: Benjamin P. Chan, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist
Originating Agency: NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services

Attachments: none