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Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: All Health Care, Schools, Universities
From: Dr. Siiri Bennett, State Epidemiologist
Subject: COVID-19 Testing Updates - September 2020
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SUMMARY:

- Persons who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, using a molecular amplification test and have not had a previous positive test, should be considered infected at the time of testing, regardless of any subsequent negative test results. Molecular amplification tests include Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and Nucleic Acid Amplification Tests (NAAT).
- Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) continues to recommend that ALL persons who were in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19 (defined as being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) should be tested, regardless of symptoms.
- Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) is working with all submitting facilities to convert to the Lab Web Portal for electronic test ordering and reporting.

COVID-19 Testing Updates - September 2020

SARS-CoV-2 Molecular Amplification Test Result Interpretation

A positive molecular amplification test indicates that the specimen had detectable SARS CoV-2 viral RNA on the specimen collection date. Molecular amplification tests have a specificity near 100%, meaning false positive tests are unlikely. Providers should assume all patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 through molecular amplification testing and have not had a previous positive SARS-CoV-2 test result are infected, regardless of subsequent test results or symptomatology.

All patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 should be instructed to isolate according to the release from isolation criteria found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>. Please note, U.S. CDC no longer recommends a test-based strategy to discontinue isolation except for those who are severely immunocompromised, in consultation with infectious disease experts. Close contacts (defined as being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) of SARS-CoV-2 positive patients should quarantine for 14 days following their most recent exposure.

COVID-19 Testing for Close Contacts

Maine CDC continues to recommend that ALL persons who were in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19 should be tested, regardless of symptoms. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of a confirmed COVID-19 case for at least 15 minutes. Though this policy differs from recent U.S. CDC guidance, Maine currently has sufficient testing capacity to continue to test close contacts.

Maine CDC continues to strongly recommend COVID-19 testing for all individuals in the following groups:

1. People with any symptoms of COVID-19;
2. People who have been in close contact of a person with COVID-19, regardless of symptoms; and
3. People who have been instructed by Maine CDC or a health care provider to get tested for the purposes of a public health investigation or infection control activities.

Lab Web Portal for HETL Specimen Submissions

HETL is asking all facilities submitting SARS Co-V-2 samples to enroll in the Lab Web Portal, as it will greatly improve test turnaround time and will reduce manual entry and human error. The Lab Web Portal is a mechanism for your facility to download an Excel spreadsheet, fill in the patient information, and then upload it in the portal as a batch. You can print the reports or save the PDF to attach to the person's medical record.

The link to the Lab Web Portal is <https://lwp-web.aimsplatform.com/me/>. Click on the link then click on "Create New Account" to submit your information. If a facility has questions about using the portal, please email covidtesting@maine.gov.

For more information:

- Maine CDC's COVID-19 Page: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus>
- US CDC's COVID-19 page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- US CDC COVID-19 testing overview page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html>