Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner

INTERPRETATION OF COVID-19 TEST RESULTS FOR TRAVELERS TO MAINE (JUNE 9, 2020)
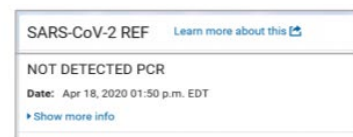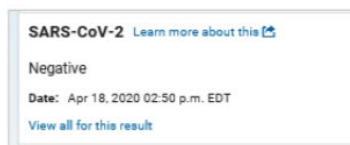
I.   Introduction

This document is intended to assist individuals who may be traveling to the State of Maine in interpreting their laboratory tests for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Pursuant to a recent Executive Order from Governor Janet Mills, individuals must attest to having received a negative test for COVID-19 on a specimen taken within 72 hours of their arrival.

There are two kinds of tests available for COVID-19: viral tests and antibody tests. A viral test tells you if you have a current infection. An antibody test tells you if you had a previous infection. An antibody test may not be able to show if you have a current infection, because it can take 1-3 weeks after infection to make antibodies. We do not know yet if having antibodies to the virus can protect someone from getting infected with the virus again, or how long that protection might last. **As a result, the State of Maine requires a viral test, also known as a "PCR test", prior to arrival or upon arrival with an agreement to quarantine pending test results.** A point-of-care test such as that performed on the ID NOW machine may also be used, although the PCR test is strongly preferred. A negative antibody test is not acceptable at this time. Viral tests are typically performed on respiratory specimens such as nasal swabs or throat swabs. They test for the presence of the virus, usually by testing for the virus's RNA.

II.   Potential Examples of Negative Test Results

The following screenshots provide examples of what your test result may display if your test is negative. If you are in doubt as to whether your test result is truly negative, please contact your health care provider for clarification before beginning your travels to Maine.

III.   Actions Based on Viral Test Results

Result	Interpretation	Recommended Action
Positive	Most likely you DO currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give the virus to others.	You may not travel to Maine. Instead, stay home and follow CDC guidance on steps to take if you feel sick. Consult with your health care provider for specific guidance. If you are a healthcare or critical infrastructure worker, notify your employer of your test result.
Negative	Most likely you DO NOT currently have an active COVID-19 infection.	Provided your test was done on a sample taken within 72 hours of arrival, you may travel to Maine. However, even with a negative result, you may still be "incubating" the virus. Thus, if you have symptoms, you may NOT travel to Maine.

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		Instead, you should keep monitoring symptoms and seek medical advice about staying home and if you need to get tested again.

        If you test negative for COVID-19 by a viral test, you probably were not infected at the time your sample was collected. However, that does not mean you will not get sick. The test result only means that you did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing. A negative test result means that the virus that causes COVID-19 was not found in your sample. If you are feeling symptoms of COVID-19 (*e.g.*, cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, etc.), do not travel to Maine even if your COVID-19 test was negative. And if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 during your stay in Maine, contact your health care provider and either remain in your place of lodging, return home or seek appropriate medical care.