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Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Health Care Providers
From: Dr. Siiri Bennett, State Epidemiologist
Subject: **First Presumptive COVID-19 Case in Maine**
Date / Time: Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 6:45pm
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Abstract:

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) reported out the first presumptive positive COVID-19 test result on a Maine resident. Currently, all positive COVID-19 results from state public health laboratories are considered presumptive until they are confirmed at the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC).

Health care providers should immediately notify infection control personnel at their health care facility if they suspect a patient of having COVID-19. Providers and health care facilities **do not** need to notify Maine CDC if they suspect their patient of having COVID-19, and **do not** need authorization to send samples to HETL. Providers should work with their health care facilities to determine the best location and method for specimen collection.

First Presumptive COVID-19 Case in Maine

Summary:

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) reported out the first presumptive positive COVID-19 test result on a Maine resident. Currently, all positive COVID-19 results from state public health laboratories are considered presumptive until they are confirmed at the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC). The patient is a woman in her 50s from Androscoggin county who was not hospitalized and is recovering at home. The patient recently returned from Italy. Maine CDC is working closely with the patient, who will continue self-isolation until her symptoms are resolved and Maine CDC deems her no longer infectious.

Recommendations for Reporting and Testing Sites:

Health care providers should immediately notify infection control personnel at their health care facility if they suspect a patient of having COVID-19. Providers and health care facilities **do not** need to notify Maine CDC if they suspect their patient of having COVID-19, and **do not** need authorization to send samples to HETL. Providers should work with their health care facilities to determine the best location and method for specimen collection.

Neither Maine CDC nor 211 currently has information on testing sites, so providers need to work within their health systems and communities to identify locations for patients to be tested.

Recommendations regarding COVID-19 Testing and Specimen Collection:

- Outpatient practices and clinics should be able to collect specimens for COVID-19 testing.
- Tests for COVID-19 require two swabs, routine NP and OP swabs. Order supplies (e.g. swab, viral transport media) via your normal channels as there is no formal collection kit. Do not use swabs with wooden shafts, calcium alginate, or cotton tips.
- Both swabs should be placed into the same vial of viral transport media.
- It is not necessary to send a patient to the local Emergency Department for testing. The Emergency Department should be reserved for patients who require clinical evaluation in an Emergency Department setting.
- Local health systems may develop specific mechanisms for consolidating testing areas and personnel.

Facilities must complete **two** requisition forms. These forms include the HETL test requisition and the SARS-CoV2 (COVID19) Submission form (available at www.mainepublichealth.gov/lab under the Clinical Microbiology section and attached to this HAN). Specimens with incomplete forms will be rejected. All specimens must be labeled with two unique patient identifiers, such as name and date of birth, as well as the specimen source. Specimens can be stored at 2-4° C for up to 72 hours after collection. Send specimens on ice packs. For specimen requirements, please see the SARS-CoV-2 laboratory submission information sheet (available at www.mainepublichealth.gov/lab under the Clinical Microbiology section).

For more information:

- Maine CDC's COVID-19 website www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus or by calling Maine CDC at **1-800-821-5821**.
- U.S. CDC's COVID-19 website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>