

**County of Santa Clara**

**Public Health Department**

Health Officer

976 Lenzen Avenue, 2nd Floor

San Jose, CA 95126



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**HEALTH UPDATE: New Guidance for COVID-19 Testing at Santa Clara County Public Health Laboratory**

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**DATE:**

March 6, 2020

**TO:**

Healthcare Providers

**FROM:**

Sara H. Cody, MD

Health Officer

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Deputy Health Officer

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Community transmission of COVID-19 in the United States has been reported in multiple areas, including Santa Clara County. Case counts are currently increasing and expected to continue this trend.

Criteria and availability of laboratory testing for COVID-19 continues to evolve. The Public Health Laboratory is currently operating at maximum capacity and is unlikely to be able to substantially increase this capacity in the near future. We understand the overwhelming demand and need for expanded access to testing. Commercial and academic laboratories are beginning to be operational, as early as today, and we expect this to increase access to COVID-19 testing.

Therefore, the Public Health Laboratory will prioritize testing requests to focus resources on critical populations. They are:

1. Critically ill (or deceased) patients
2. Healthcare providers (HCP) who are known contacts of COVID-19 cases.
3. Other hospitalized patients who are likely to have COVID-19
4. Resident or employee of a long-term care or assisted living facility

At this time, all other testing requests should be routed to commercial or academic laboratories, such as LabCorp and Quest. Please do **not** ask patients to call Public Health for testing, as we do not have testing capacity for patients other than those above. If you do not have access to testing, please inform the patient that they cannot be tested yet, but that commercial testing is ramping up soon. Please tell them to isolate themselves at home away from other household members until 3 days (72 hours) after complete resolution of symptoms. As an example, if the patient has symptoms that last for 7 days, they would self-isolate at home for 10 days total. We will have an isolation fact sheet for patients available shortly at our website [www.sccphd.org/coronavirus](http://www.sccphd.org/coronavirus).

If you test a patient through a **commercial or academic laboratory**, please notify Public Health of all positive tests for COVID-19 by sending a secure email to [coronavirus@phd.sccgov.org](mailto:coronavirus@phd.sccgov.org). Please attach an electronic copy, scan, or photo of the Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) [www.sccgov.org/sites/phd-p/report/Documents/morb-110a.pdf](http://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd-p/report/Documents/morb-110a.pdf). Please write on the form if the patient falls into one of the categories below. HCP and laboratories are additionally instructed to contact Public Health by email as above or phone (408-885-4214) for any positive case who is a:

- Resident or employee of a long-term care or assisted living facility
- Hospitalized individual
- Healthcare provider

We expect that these instructions will change as commercial testing capability increases. Thank you for your patience as we navigate this rapidly evolving situation together.