



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

Laboratories Administration
Robert A. Myers, Ph.D., Director
1770 Ashland Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21205

DATE: June 22, 2020

TO: Medical Laboratory Directors, Local Health Officers
and Health Care Providers

FROM: Robert A. Myers, Ph.D. 
Director, Laboratories Administration

RE: **UPDATED COVID-19 Testing Priorities Guidance**

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Laboratories Administration continues to update its guidance in response to the emerging, rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing). Priorities for testing are outlined below in accordance with MDH Secretary of Health Robert R. Neall's recent Directive <https://www.mbp.state.md.us/forms/06192020ExecOrder.pdf>

- **PRIORITY I**
 - Any symptomatic individual
- **PRIORITY II**
 - Asymptomatic individuals where COVID-19 exposure may be possible, including:
 - Contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases (e.g., contact tracing, outbreak or cluster investigation).
 - Residents and staff of congregate living settings and long-term care facilities (e.g., nursing homes, assisted living facilities, residential programs and group homes serving individuals with developmental disabilities, behavioral health residential programs and group homes, dormitories, housing shelters, detention or correctional facilities).
- **PRIORITY III**
 - Healthcare workers and first responders (e.g., emergency medical service personnel, home health care workers, and law enforcement personnel)
- **PRIORITY IV**
 - Patients, especially high-risk unstable patients, whose care would be altered by a diagnosis of COVID-19.
- **PRIORITY V**
 - Individuals employed in close contact settings (e.g., retail, public transport, school, childcare, camp, food service or processing, personal services, or for children attending school, camp, or child care, and manufacturing)
- **PRIORITY VI**
 - Individuals previously in a large gathering.

Based on a public health cluster, outbreak, or contact tracing investigation, an individual may be directed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) or a local health department to be tested

On the MDH Laboratories Administration test order form you MUST indicate the specimen's Priority Level. (<https://health.maryland.gov/laboratories/Pages/Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>) The MDH Laboratories Administration will continue to conduct COVID-19 testing in support of local health departments for outbreak and death investigations.

For questions or concerns, please contact the Laboratories Administration during normal business hours at 443-681-3791 or 443-681-3800 (main number). For all calls after hours please contact the Laboratories Administration at 410-925-3121.

cc: Frances Phillips
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