



DATE:	3/5/2020
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Commercial Laboratory Testing Available
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	n/a
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) is releasing the following advisory regarding commercial laboratory testing for 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

- As of 3/5/2020, COVID-19 has NOT been detected within Pennsylvania
- Commercial laboratory testing for COVID-19 is available
- Testing is still available at DOH Bureau of Laboratories (BOL)
- COVID-19 is a reportable condition
- Call **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)** to consult with DOH if there is strong clinical suspicion of COVID-19 prior to test results becoming available

Commercial Laboratory Testing for COVID-19

COVID-19 testing is now available from at least one commercial laboratory, with additional laboratories expected to begin to offer testing over the next several days. Testing is still available through the Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories (BOL).

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. Decisions on which patients receive testing should be based on the local epidemiology of COVID-19, as well as the clinical course of illness. As of 3/5/2020, there have been no cases of COVID-19 detected in

Pennsylvania. Clinicians are strongly encouraged to test for other causes of respiratory illness, including infections such as influenza. For guidance on how to submit to a commercial laboratory, refer to the guidance the commercial laboratories provide as they come online.

COVID-19 is a reportable condition to the DOH. Any positive test results from any laboratory must be reported to DOH via the Pennsylvania National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (PA-NEDSS).

If you have a strong clinical suspicion that a patient may be infected with COVID-19 based on clinical symptoms and epidemiological factors (e.g., close contact with a confirmed case, recent travel to an area with sustained transmission), contact the DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) prior to test results becoming available.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of March 5, 2020 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.