



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

Safety, Oversight and Quality

PO Box 14530, Salem, OR 97309

3406 Cherry Ave NE, Salem, OR 97303

Phone: (503) 373-2227

Fax (503) 378-8966

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Date: April 1, 2020

TO: Nursing Facilities Providers
Assisted Living Facilities
Residential Care Facilities
Memory Care Facilities

FROM: Safety, Oversight, and Quality

SUBJECT: Process for ordering COVID-19 Testing in LTC Settings

This communication is being sent to advise all Long-Term Care Providers (LTC) of the process related to ordering COVID-19 testing in Long-Term Care Facilities.

We all know that residents in vulnerable populations, like those in Long-Term Care settings, are at potentially higher risk for more severe COVID-19 disease, so OHA and DHS would like to ensure access to timely testing in those settings, especially when a COVID-19 case has not been previously confirmed within your facility.

To ensure timely testing to identify COVID-19 in long-term care facilities in which disease has not been previously identified, LTC providers should order testing for symptomatic residents and staff by:

- Sending a specimen(s) to a lab that **can return results within 1-3 days**. Providers may want to confirm turnaround time with the lab prior to sending the specimen.
- **If the provider does not have access to a lab that can provide timely results**, the health care provider of the resident or worker should collect a nasopharyngeal specimen and send it to the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL).
- If there is a cluster of COVID-19 like illness in persons who live or work in the long-term care setting, up to five nasopharyngeal

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specimens from symptomatic individuals in the cohort may be sent to OSPHL. This does not prevent the provider from using other testing facilities, if available, to request additional COVID-19 tests.

- The LTC provider should immediately notify the local public health authority and the Safety, Oversight & Quality Unit of the suspected case(s) and must report the results of the test to the Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit.

Request for approval for testing at OSPHL must be submitted using the Confidential Oregon Morbidity Report at:

www.healthoregon.org/howtoreport.

When submitting test to the OSPHL (this does not apply to providers using other labs for testing):

The healthcare provider ordering the test must be sure to answer “Yes” to “Does the patient work or live in a congregate setting (e.g., LTCF, correctional facility, shelter)” question on the eCR form.

Please follow OSPHL specimen acceptance criteria posted on the OSPHL Lab Test Menu at www.healthoregon.org/labtests.

Currently the OSPHL is processing specimens within one to three days which may be faster than many other laboratories. OSPHL is able to provide initial testing to determine if COVID-19 is in an LTC or other congregate setting to help inform infection control practices.

While flu is circulating, facilities should still consider flu may be a cause of respiratory symptoms. Flu testing should be performed by the provider’s primary reference lab.

If you are a nursing facility provider and have questions about this alert, please contact the Nursing Facility Licensing Unit at: NFLicensing@state.or.us

If you are a community based care provider and have questions about this alert, please contact the CBC Team at: CBCTEAM@DHSOHA.STATE.OR.US

For general information about the DHS Office of Safety, Oversight and Quality, visit the DHS Web site at www.oregon.gov/DHS/.