MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**This is an official
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert**

MESSAGE ID: **MSHAN-2020317-00432-ALT (Health Alert)**

RECIPIENTS: **All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and
Healthcare Providers - Statewide**

DATE: **Tuesday, March 17, 2020**

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Update—MSDH Testing Priorities
and Submission of Samples to the
Mississippi Public Health Laboratory,
March 17, 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

- The Mississippi State Department of Health is reporting 21 cases of COVID -19 in the state as of March 17, 2020.
- Limited community transmission and transmission among close contacts is occurring.
- To date, the Mississippi Public Health Laboratory (MPHL) has tested 389 patients for COVID-19.
- Please call the MSDH Office of Epidemiology at 601-576-7725 (601-576-7400 after hours) with questions or concerns.

Mississippi Public Health Laboratory Update

1. TESTING PRIORITIES

Priority patients for COVID-19 testing are those with fever (≥100.4° F) and acute respiratory illness (e.g. cough, difficulty breathing) who meet the following criteria:

Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
Symptomatic healthcare personnel, especially with a history of travel to an affected country (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html **) or known contact to a suspected or confirmed cases in the 14 days prior to symptom onset.**
Other symptomatic individuals (fever of ≥100.4° F and acute respiratory illness), especially in individuals at higher risk for poor outcomes (older adults and/or underlying chronic disease)

2. SUBMISSION OF SAMPLES DOES NOT REQUIRE PRIOR APPROVAL

a. For patients who do not meet the above priorities, clinicians may also elect to submit samples to a commercial laboratory for SARS-CoV-2 testing (the virus that causes COVID-19).

b. Submission of samples to the public health laboory or a commercial laboratory does not require prior approval from MSDH.

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3. **ONLY NP SWAB REQUIRED**
   a. CDC recommends collecting only an NP swab. Swab must be synthetic fiber with plastic shaft in 2-3 ml of viral transport media.
   b. **MSDH does not provide these testing supplies.**
   c. COVID-19 Specimen Collection https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8501.pdf
   d. COVID-19 Lab Requisition Form https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8500.pdf

4. **SAMPLE PACKAGING**
   a. COVID-19 Refrigerated Specimen Packaging https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8499.pdf
   b. COVID-19 Frozen Specimen Packaging (optional for hospitals)
      https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8498.pdf

5. **MPHL ACCEPTS COVID-19 SAMPLES 7 DAYS/WEEK**
   a. COVID-19 Specimen Transport Delivery https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8497.pdf
   b. Monday-Friday COVID-19 samples may be dropped off at the County Health Department for delivery to MPHL (contact your MSDH clinic prior to dropping off to confirm hours of operation. During weekdays, if an alternate MSDH drop-off location is required, contact the MSDH Office of Field Services at 601-576-7951 for assistance.
   c. COVID-19 samples may be dropped off every day directly at the MPHL 8:00am-4:30pm, including **Saturday and Sunday**
   d. As needed, COVID-19 testing is performed at MPHL 7 days/week.

6. **RESULTS**
   a. COVID-19 Results Reporting https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8496.pdf
   b. The turnaround time for results is 24-48 hours after specimen receipt at the PHL.
   c. The results will be provided to the **identified submitter (name, address, phone number)** on the lab requisition form.
   d. MPHL provides results through 2 processes:
      i. Web-based reporting through a Laboratory Information System (LIMS) web portal application
      ii. Fax reporting through a pre-approved fax number
   e. Providers are strongly encouraged to submit samples to the PHL through their normal hospital laboratory process if available. Most hospital laboratories are already enrolled in the LIMS web portal to receive results, or have a pre-approved fax number to receive results. This process will ensure timely and accurate receipt of results.
   f. Providers who wish to set up their own individual accounts for MPHL results see https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8495.pdf

Paul Byers, MD
State Epidemiologist

Additional Resources
- **Healthcare Personnel with Potential COVID-19 Exposure**
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html
- **CDC Home Care Guidance** https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html
- **Disposition of Non-Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19**
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html
- **Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations**
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html
- **CDC recommends travelers defer all cruise travel worldwide**
  https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/coronavirus-cruise-ship

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Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency:	Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program:	MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)
Message Identifier:	MSHAN-2020317-00432-ALT
Program (HAN) Type:	Health Alert
Status (Type):	Actual ()
Message Type:	Alert
Reference:	MSHAN-00432
Severity:	Unknown
Acknowledgement:	No
Sensitive:	Not Sensitive
Message Expiration:	Undetermined
Urgency:	Undetermined
Delivery Time:	600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**).

Program (HAN) Type: 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.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

	Actual:	Communication or alert refers to a live event
	Exercise:	Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
	Test:	Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded

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Message Type:

Alert:	Indicates an original Alert
Update:	Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
Cancel:	Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
Error:	Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of "Update" or "Cancel", this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. "n/a" = Not Applicable.

Severity:

Extreme:	Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe:	Significant threat to life or property
Moderate:	Possible threat to life or property
Minor:	Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown:	Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

Sensitive:	Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive:	Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).

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