



## MEMORANDUM

Date: March 14, 2020  
To: RUHS Public Health Laboratory Submitters  
From: Errin C. Rider, Ph.D., D(ABMM), Laboratory Director, RUHS Public Health Laboratory  
Re: Guidance for Submission of Specimens for COVID-19 Testing

The RUHS Public Health (PH) Laboratory is accepting specimens for COVID-19 testing for any Persons Under Investigation (PUI) who are approved by the Public Health Disease Control program.

**All testing requests must go through RUHS-PH. Please call 951 358 5107 during business hours, or after hours 951 782 2974 for on-call if urgent or emergent.**

### Determining Who Should Be Tested

The CDC no longer has specific requirements for Persons Under Investigation (PUIs). However, Public Health may require a risk assessment, and testing for COVID-19 is *not* recommended as routine or panel testing. When obtaining the history of a suspected case of COVID-19, **be prepared to present** to the Department of Public Health the following information to evaluate the case:

- Symptoms (fever, cough, other lower respiratory symptoms)
- Date of onset
- Travel dates (including **specific cities or regions visited** and **when**). For many countries the specific region is vital to determining exact risk.
- Individuals this person was exposed to who may have COVID-19, and information on why you suspect them to be meaningful exposures. The highest level of concern involves **household contacts**.
- Other testing. **Influenza should be ruled out:** flu and COVID-19 disease are difficult to distinguish clinically, and influenza B activity in the county remains elevated. The Department also strongly advises obtaining a **respiratory viral panel** and considering a **rapid strep** test if pharyngitis is noted. You may be required to complete other initial testing before specimens are accepted.

### Ordering the COVID-19 Real Time RT-PCR test:

For submitters that are not interfaced with the PHL, please complete a CLI.CSR.FRM.013 V2 - Novel Coronavirus 2019 Lab Test Request Form.

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Kim Saruwatari, M.P.H., Director

Cameron Kaiser, M.D., Public Health Officer



For **internal** RUHS submitters:

- Once available, please order the test via EPIC or Novius.
- Additional guidance will follow this memo with instructions of how to order the test electronically.
- The PH laboratory will provide collection supplies. Please submit a CLI.CSR.FRM.014 V1 PH LAB COVID-19 SUPPLY REQUEST FORM.

*Please note: that collection supplies will be provided on a case by case basis for external submitters sending specimens to the public health laboratory.*

**Collection by Nasopharyngeal swab AND oropharyngeal swab (NP/OP swab):**

Use a synthetic fiber swab with plastic shaft. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts. Place swab immediately into a sterile tube with 2-3 ml of viral transport media (VTM).

NP and OP swabs can now be **combined** into a single tube with 2-3 ml of VTM. Please still collect both an NP and OP swab, if possible, however the PHL will accept a single NP swab. Single OP swabs will be rejected. **THE PREFERRED SPECIMEN FOR THE MOST ACCURATE RESULTS IS THE NP/OP COMBINATION!**

**Storage and Transport of Specimens:**

Specimens *must* be stored at 2-8°C and shipped on cold/ice packs. Specimens must be tested within 72 hours of collection.

For transport, wrap specimen cap in parafilm to prevent leakage and place each specimen into a separate biohazard bag containing an absorbent sheet. Specimen must be accompanied by the appropriate LTR or electronic request form. Test request *must* include a PUI # or the specimen will not be tested.

Please contact the laboratory with any questions.

*Please help us by giving a copy of this memo to the appropriate people in your facility.*