LAB ALERT #2: Updated Guidance for 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Date: February 18, 2020

To: South Dakota Public Health Laboratory Clientele

From: South Dakota Public Health Laboratory Client Services

Suspect COVID-19 Illness

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) testing will only be performed for a person under investigation (PUI) as determined by the South Dakota Department of Health (SD-DOH). Please contact the SD-DOH for questions regarding COVID-19 PUI definition (1-800-592-1861 or 605-773-3737).

Specimen Collection

The following specimens are required for 2019-nCoV testing:
- All PUIs: Nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport medium
- All PUIs: Oropharyngeal swab in viral transport medium
- PUIs with advanced disease: Sputum (only if producing; do not induce)

Duplicate specimens should be collected. One set of specimens should be shipped to SDPHL, and the second set of specimens should be stored at 2-8°C until needed.

Clinical Laboratory Testing

COVID-19 PUIs must be tested for common respiratory pathogens such as influenza; SDPHL offers influenza testing and the Respiratory Pathogens Panel (RPP) for facilities with limited testing capabilities. Do not attempt virus culture. Test results should be communicated to the SDPHL as soon as they are available.

Packaging and Shipping

Specimens for 2019-nCoV testing should be shipped to the SDPHL on ice packs as a Category B biological substance. Specimens can be shipped using the SDPHL courier service. The courier can be reached at 877-434-9366.

For any questions regarding the information provided in this LAB ALERT, contact the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory at 605-773-3368.

Please distribute this LAB ALERT to others in your facility that may need this information.