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## **LAB ALERT: Updated Guidance for Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)**

**Date:** January 24, 2020

**To:** South Dakota Public Health Laboratory Clientele

**From:** South Dakota Public Health Laboratory Client Services

As of January 24, 2020, CDC has confirmed two US cases of novel coronavirus, 2019-nCoV, in travelers returning from Wuhan, China. In response to the rapid increase in cases globally, CDC has provided guidance for the collection and testing of specimens from patients under investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV infection. Highlights from the guidance include the following:

### **Recommendations for Healthcare Providers**

- A detailed history must be obtained for patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness
- Patients who meet the following criteria should be evaluated as a PUI for 2019-nCoV:
  - Fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness with,
    - History of travel from Wuhan City, China or
    - Close contact with a person who is under investigation for 2019-nCoV
- When evaluating a PUI for 2019-nCoV:
  - Use standard, contact, and airborne precautions, and eye protection
  - Notify the SD-DOH immediately at 605-773-3737 or 800-592-1861

For the full guidance for HealthCare Professionals, please see:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>

### **Specimen Collection and Handling:**

- Collection timing:
  - Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a PUI is identified regardless of symptom onset
  - Duplicate specimens should be collected when possible
  - One set of specimens should be shipped to SDPHL as soon as possible
- Acceptable specimen types:
  - Primary:
    - Lower respiratory (BAL, BW, etc.)

- Upper respiratory (Separate NP and OP swabs in VTM)
    - Serum
  - Secondary:
    - Stool
    - Urine
- Laboratory testing:
  - Specimens should be tested for:
    - Influenza
    - Non-influenza respiratory pathogens
    - For facilities with limited testing capabilities, SDPHL offers influenza PCR as well as the Respiratory Pathogens Panel, a syndromic panel for many common respiratory pathogens
  - Do NOT attempt viral isolation
  - Test results should be communicated to SDPHL as soon as they are complete
- Packaging and Shipping
  - Specimens must be stored at 2-8°C and should be shipped on ice packs
  - Specimens may be shipped as a Category B, Biological Substance

For the full specimen collection and testing guidelines, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>

**Laboratory Safety for Handling Potentially Infectious Materials:**

- Lab workers should wear appropriate personal protective equipment:
  - Disposable gloves, lab coat/gown, and eye protection
- Any procedure with the potential to generate aerosols (vortexing or sonicating) should be performed in a biological safety cabinet
- Containment devices should be used for centrifugation
- Work surfaces and equipment must be decontaminated with appropriate disinfectant after processing specimens
  - Ensure manufacturer's instructions for dilution, shelf-life, and contact time are followed

For the full biosafety guidelines, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html>

CDC is currently the only laboratory performing diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV. Specimens from PUIs that meet the criteria for 2019-nCoV testing will be routed through the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory.

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.