

## Updated COVID-19 Preparedness Protocol for Patient Testing in Medical Clinics – as of March 17, 2020

In collaboration with Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health and in an effort to establish structure to the screening and testing process for patients, the following steps including updates in **RED** and information attached/below should be followed:

For individuals receiving the screening questions and who respond yes to the symptoms and yes to 1 of the 2 travel questions below:

- Exhibiting symptoms (cough, fever of 100.4 and above and shortness of breath),
- Has been in contact with someone who was confirmed positive for COVID-19 ~~has traveled internationally~~ in the last 30 days
- Or has traveled to **ANY** high risk affected areas in the United States

Next, ask the individual if they are seeking medical care.

- If yes, the individual should be escorted to an isolated room with the proper PPE.
- If no, send the individual home.

The provider should exercise clinical judgement in determining the order of a full respiratory viral panel (RVP) panel.

- If the RVP is ordered, the testing can be completed in the provider's clinic OR **scheduled** at the FRHS off-site testing clinic through the House Supervisor by calling 402/992.4356.

Following the test, the patient should be sent home and instructed to self-quarantine until results are available.

- If positive, the patient will be treated as needed.
- If negative, ~~the ordering provider will contact Public Health about completing COVID-19 testing.~~ **Please see the Updated COVID-19 updates (attached and below) published by Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department as of March 17, 2020 at 4:56pm.**

For any individual that does not screen positive, the provider can still exercise clinical judgement to order the full RVP to be completed in their clinic or scheduling at the FRHS off-site testing clinic through the House Supervisor by calling 402/992.4356. **Please see Updated COVID-19 updates (attached and below) published by Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department as of March 17, 2020 at 4:56pm. Providers can still utilize commercial reference labs but be advised that results can take up to a week.**



## Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department

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*Proudly serving Burt, Cuming,  
Madison and Stanton Counties*

**To:** Medical Providers, Medical Clinics, and Hospitals  
**From:** Gina Uhing, Health Director  
**RE:** COVID-19 updates IMPORTANT  
**Date:** March 17, 2020

**Please pass this information to all providers, triage nurses, ER physicians, etc. in your facility.**

There is a **severe** shortage in the ability for labs to process COVID-19 tests. This means that commercial labs and Nebraska Public Health Lab are overloaded beyond capacity and have an accumulation of tests waiting to be processed. This is due to too many tests being done on non-qualifying individuals.

Many of you are receiving requests to test from patients that are reporting having allegedly been exposed. Please know that at the time of this writing, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Burt, Cuming, Stanton or Madison Counties. Further, there are **no** dates, locations or times where there were true exposures in any of these counties. This means that of the confirmed COVID-19 patients living elsewhere in Nebraska, none reported having visited any locations in these counties while they were ill. There are a lot of rumors circulating, and we would like to see the medical community come together to help dispel those. Should a point of exposure, such as a public location, business or school be identified in the ELVPHD area, ELVPHD will let the medical community know this information directly.

Regarding employers demanding/requiring their employees to be tested, this is contributing to an overload of tests hitting the labs. Lab results are being delayed on very ill people due to this inundation at the labs. Tests should **ONLY** be being done according to the following criteria:

- Travelers from the linked geographic areas <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#alert> (within 14 days of their symptom onset); OR
- Patients that are hospitalized with severe lower respiratory illness; OR
- Healthcare workers that are symptomatic; OR
- Symptomatic patients in public safety occupations (law enforcement, fire, EMS); OR
- Symptomatic patients that have been identified as a direct contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. Again, remember that there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases in the ELVPHD district; thus, there are no known points of exposure in the district; OR
- An illness cluster in a facility or institution (healthcare, school, corrections, shelters, etc.); OR
- Patients that meet ONE of the following:
  - Symptomatic people aged 60 years or older
  - Symptomatic patient with an underlying medical condition
  - Symptomatic pregnant women.

Young, healthy individuals with mild illness should not be tested. They should be instructed to follow social isolation procedures if they are sick. Testing should not be done on persons without symptoms, and should not be done based upon employer recommendation only. The eligibility criteria is really important in order to preserve state and commercial testing supplies and to ensure that timely results for the most critical patients can be received. This may require the practitioner to write a note to an employer that his/her employee may not fit the testing criteria.