

February 28, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) is providing this update regarding the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) outbreak.

In the last 24 hours, CDC has updated their [guidance](#) for evaluating and reporting persons under investigation (PUI):

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization	AND	A history of travel from affected geographic areas* within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza)	AND	No source of exposure has been identified

\* Geographic regions where sustained community transmission has been identified with at least a CDC Level 2 Travel Health Notice. As of 2/28/20: China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea.

Regardless of specific clinical features or epidemiologic risk, clinicians with a high index of suspicion for COVID-19 in a patient they are treating should contact TDH for clinical consultation.

Resources that can help you prepare for a potential case in your practice or facility, or simply to learn more about the rapidly developing situation include:

- [TDH's Novel Coronavirus webpage](#) which includes [TDH Novel Coronavirus Triage and Assessment Guidance](#).
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Novel Coronavirus webpage](#) which includes many [resources for healthcare providers](#). Please note:
  - [Healthcare Providers Preparedness Checklist](#)
  - [Hospital Preparedness Checklist](#)
  - [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#)
  - [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#)

Please continue to routinely ask patients about recent (prior 14 days) travel history at points of [triage and patient assessment](#), and communicate relevant findings to infection control staff, public health officials, and treating clinicians.

If you suspect COVID-19 in a patient, please call TDH at 615-741-7247. TDH staff will consult with providers to determine if patients meet criteria for laboratory testing.

Please share this message widely with healthcare partners.

Thank you for all that you do in keeping Tennesseans safe and healthy.

Tennessee Department of Health