



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Public Health
Division

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

To: All Healthcare Providers in Santa Cruz County
From: Gail Newel, MD, MPH, County Public Health Officer
Subject: Local Guidance for Testing & Reporting for COVID-19
Date: March 18, 2020

As of March 18, 2020, the Santa Cruz County Public Health Division has confirmed thirteen cases of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) among county residents. Community transmission is expected to increase and healthcare facilities should continue to prepare accordingly. Public Health has activated its Department Operations Center (DOC) and is actively responding to this rapidly evolving situation with guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC recently published mitigation strategies for communities experiencing local transmission of COVID-19. **In Santa Cruz County, the level of transmission and impact of COVID-19 is currently considered MODERATE.**

Specific mitigation strategies for healthcare providers and settings may be found on page 8:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>.

The goals of mitigation strategies are to slow the transmission of disease and to emphasize protection of the following groups:

- Those at risk for severe illness, including older adults and persons of any age with underlying health conditions
- The healthcare and critical infrastructure workforces

Healthcare facilities should consider mitigation strategies related to: healthcare workforce, staff and visitor policies, specimen collection and testing capacity, intensive care capacity, and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Local Guidance: Testing & Reporting of COVID-19

Testing	<p>Asymptomatic patients should NOT be tested. People with mild symptoms should be encouraged to stay home; they do not necessarily need to be tested. Symptomatic patients requiring testing for COVID-19 should be counseled to <u>self-isolate</u> until test results are obtained.</p> <p>Commercial Lab: For symptomatic patients suspected to have COVID-19, providers may send specimens directly to commercial laboratories WITHOUT notifying Public Health about testing. However, if the patient is suspected for COVID-19 and associated with a vulnerable population, please promptly call the Communicable Disease Unit at 831-454-4114 and submit a CDC PUI form via fax 831-454-5049 or secure email HSACD@santacruzhealth.us.</p> <p>Public Health Lab: If a patient meets certain clinical and/or epidemiological criteria, providers <u>may choose</u> to coordinate with Santa Cruz County Public Health to send specimens to a Public Health Lab (PHL). Guidance on this process found here: Local Guidance for Testing and Reporting for COVID-19, revised 3-18-20</p>
Reporting	<p>Report all lab-positive cases of COVID-19 <u>immediately</u> to the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) by phone at 831-454-4114. If after hours or on weekends, call 831-471-1170 and ask for the Health Officer. CALL, DO NOT FAX. Once reported, Public Health will contact the patient to conduct a disease investigation and provide further instructions.</p>
More Info	<p>CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV CDPH: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx Santa Cruz County Public Health, local guidance: www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus</p>