LOCAL GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19: TESTING & REPORTING

Local guidelines to TEST for COVID-19 in Santa Cruz County:

Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested. **Asymptomatic patients should NOT be tested. The COVID-19 test has not been validated for asymptomatic patients.**

**People with mild symptoms should be encouraged to stay home; they do not necessarily need to be tested.** These patients should be instructed to contact their healthcare provider by phone should symptoms worsen. Older patients and individuals who have underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their physician early in the course of even mild illness.

**Patients who have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, should seek care immediately.**

Symptomatic patients requiring testing for COVID-19 should be counseled to **self-quarantine** until test results are obtained.

There are currently two testing options for COVID-19:

I. **For patients suspected to have COVID-19, providers may send specimens directly to commercial laboratories WITHOUT notifying Public Health.** When ordering, please copy the Communicable Disease Unit on the results, through fax 831-454-5049 or email HSACD@santacruzhealth.org.

II. **If a patient meets clinical and/or epidemiological criteria below, providers may choose to coordinate with Santa Cruz County Public Health to send specimens to a Public Health Lab (PHL).**

To order COVID-19 testing through a Public Health Lab:

1. **Screen** patient for PUI eligibility (ie, meeting one of the scenarios below):
   a. Patient is referred from Public Health’s Communicable Disease (CD) Unit for COVID-19 testing through a Public Health Lab. CD will coordinate directly with the provider to provide testing authorization.
   b. Fever (subjective or confirmed) **OR** signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath); **AND** close contact with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset
   c. Fever (subjective or confirmed) **AND** signs/symptoms of 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. A current list of affected geographic areas can be found here: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html)
   d. Fever (subjective or confirmed) 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.

If criteria is **not met**, specimen will not be approved to be sent to a PHL. Clinician can decide to send through a commercial lab. **If criteria is met, complete CDC PUI form and send to CD** via FAX to (831) 454-5049 or
2. **Collect specimens:** Nasopharyngeal swab, oropharyngeal swab in separate viral transport medium or equivalent. For patients who develop a productive cough, sputum should be collected and tested for the virus that causes COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2. The induction of sputum is not recommended. Complete “Submitting Form Public Health Lab Testing for COVID-19” form (link below) and include with specimen shipping forms:


3. **Request authorization** from Santa Cruz County Public Health, Communicable Disease Unit. Authorization is available during business hours, Monday-Friday 8am – 5pm. Store specimens until authorization is received. If unable to store or freeze specimens while waiting for authorization, send the specimen to a commercial lab.

   a. If authorization is received:
      i. Obtain a PUI ID number from Santa Cruz County Public Health; include ID on the PUI form, shipping form, and Lab Request form (available at www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus).
      ii. Proceed with shipping directly to Santa Clara PHL, following direction listed in the Shipping Capable Lab Guidance document. Otherwise, send specimens to Santa Cruz County Public Health, following directions in the Non-Shipping Capable Lab Guidance document. Both forms can be found at www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus.

   b. If authorization is not received, the provider may choose to submit specimens to a commercial lab, adhering to commercial lab instructions.

**Local guidelines to REPORT COVID-19 in Santa Cruz County:**

Report all presumptive-positive and confirmed-positive cases of COVID-19 immediately 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.

Local patient guidance documents will be posted in the “Healthcare Provider Information” section here, as available: www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus.

**Additional Information and Guidance:**

California Department of Public Health, guidance documents:
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 guidance:

County of Santa Cruz, Public Health – local updates and guidance:
www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus