

3/13/2020

*\* NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

## **COVID-19 Update and Information from Medic One: COVID-19 Update #12**

### **Requested Action:**

- 1) Continue to assess, report both suspect and confirmed cases of COVID- 19 you test to Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department.
- 2) We know that testing resources and access continue as an issue in our community. We are working with community partners to find a solution and reduce burdens on our Emergency Departments. **Emergency Departments are only testing individuals ill enough to require admission for supportive care.**
- 3) Prioritize patients for testing, not everyone needs to be tested:  
 Patients with COVID-19 symptoms considered at highest priority for testing include:
  - Healthcare workers
  - Patients in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)
  - Patients involved in an illness cluster in a facility or institution (e.g., healthcare, school, corrections, shelters)
  - Patients with severe lower respiratory illness (hospitalized or fatal)
  - Patients older than 60 years
  - Patients with underlying medical conditions
  - Pregnant women
  - Patients with worsening symptoms
- 4) Provide patients whether testing them or not, with the guidance documents that fits the patient's situation, so they know how to prevent the spread of infection to other people, and to minimize phone calls to your office and to public health.
  - Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDcasepositive.pdf>
  - Patients who were exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDexposed.pdf>
  - Unexposed patients with COVID-19 symptoms - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDconcerned.pdf>

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- 5) Review the below order Medic One is providing to all transporting EMT's and paramedics in Thurston County.



MEDIC ONE



12 March 2020

To: All transporting EMTs and paramedics in Thurston County

With the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Thurston County, we will start to see increasing demands for testing from both patients and providers. Some of these cases will be among patients that have only mild symptoms or perhaps no symptoms at all. There will be a tendency for patients or caregivers to want to seek testing at the Emergency Department. This is not appropriate or recommended. As of this writing, the Emergency Department is only testing patients that are sick enough to require admission for supportive care. Mildly ill patients are being asked to self-quarantine at home and seek care from their primary care providers or as directed by public health. I am writing this directive because I realize that as EMS providers you are being put in the middle. There are long term care facilities that are currently requesting hospital transport for residents to get screened for SARS-COV2. With agreement of the Thurston County Public Health Officer, I am therefore directing the following:

1. No patient should be transported to any hospital-based emergency department solely for the purpose of testing for SARS-COV2 or COVID-19
2. For patients with respiratory symptoms and a fever, screen for the following:
  - a. Respiratory Rate over 20
  - b. Heart rate over 100
  - c. Increased work of breathing
  - d. Decreased level of alertness (from baseline)
  - e. Any other life-threatening symptoms or signs
3. Patients that do not demonstrate any of the above screens will not be transported to the Emergency Department and will be left at their facility. Patients will be asked to follow up with primary care, follow up with public health, or to call back if symptoms worsen.
4. Public health is currently working on a solution to aid in-facility testing for these individuals

Please practice compassion and continue to be kind, courteous, and professional with patients, their families, and facility staff as we will sometimes not meet their expectations with this strategy. However, please explain that these are your orders, and as best you can, the reason behind these orders. It is never the intention to deny any patient emergent medical care. However, for a patient that does not require admission, there is no good outcome to be expected from transportation into AND out of a facility that will concentrate exposures.

Larry Fontanilla Jr. MD

MPD, Thurston County Medic One

3/13/2020

## Background:

March 11, 2020 we were notified about the first case of COVID-19 reported in a 56-year-old Thurston County resident. We have interviewed the patient and identified the patients contacts who are in a very controlled setting and notified contacts and put appropriate prevention and intervention measures in place. As of March 13<sup>th</sup>, there are now 457 positive results and 31 deaths in Washington State with 13 counties reporting cases.

## Resources:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

DOH - Provider guidance on testing:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Interim-2019NovelCoronavirusQuicksheetProviders.pdf>

DOH – Specimen Collection and Submission:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5240/SCSI-2019-nCoV.pdf>

DOH – Healthcare Provider Guidance -

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/HealthcareProviders>

CDC COVID-19 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC - Optimizing supply of N95: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Frespirator-supply-strategies.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Frespirator-supply-strategies.html)

CDC Health care Professionals Guidance - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>

DOH - Droplet Precautions:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/SpecialDropletContactPrecautionsSign.pdf>

Washington State Hospital Association - WISHA website: <https://www.wsha.org/for-patients/coronavirus/>

## THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting <b>non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day)</b>	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
<b>Day time immediately reportable conditions</b> – Call detailed information to the 24-hour Notifiable Condition Reporting Line at 360-786-5470. Messages are picked up hourly. If a call back can't wait call 360-867-2500 and ask staff to locate a Communicable Disease staff.	Phone: 360-786-5470
<b>After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is <b>immediately notifiable</b>	1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: <http://bit.ly/CDUpdatePHSS>