

	Health Alert Network Message 20-39: SARS-CoV-2 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Testing Prioritization When Testing Capacity is Limited
Origination Date: <i>July 14, 2020</i>	Revision Dates (list all revision dates):

**Update 07/14/2020: SARS-CoV-2 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)
Testing Prioritization When Testing Capacity is Limited**

PCR testing for SARS-CoV-2 is widely available at hospital, academic, commercial, and community-based settings across Louisiana. However, there are times when local testing capacity may be limited as a result of increased demand for testing. This interim guidance is intended to support health care providers and laboratories in determining prioritization of specific groups for PCR testing when testing capacity is limited.

Priority 1

- Symptomatic, hospitalized patients.
- Symptomatic individuals who also have underlying chronic health conditions, are >65 years of age or are immunosuppressed.
- Residents and Staff of Nursing Homes following the LDH mandate.
- Other congregate living settings (e.g. jails, shelters) as recommended by LDH.
- Persons identified for testing by public health investigations and disease control activities in high risk settings.
- Symptomatic healthcare workers who are critical to the COVID-19 response.
- Symptomatic individuals who are close contacts** of a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient.
- Symptomatic first responders or critical infrastructure workers.

Priority 2

- All other symptomatic individuals.
- Asymptomatic, high-risk, close contacts of a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients. (High risk= >65 years of age, underlying health condition or immunosuppressed).

Priority 3

- All other asymptomatic close contacts of a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient.

Priority 4

- Community surveillance as directed by LDH Office of Public Health.

Priority 5

- Asymptomatic individuals with no known exposure to a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient.
- COVID-19 patients being tested to determine return to work eligibility.
- Most COVID-19 patients should follow CDC's time or symptom based criteria for end of home isolation***. However, testing to determine end of isolation is appropriate for persons with weakened immune systems.

Description of symptoms associated with COVID-19

Atypical presentations have been described, and older adults and persons with medical comorbidities may have delayed presentation of fever and respiratory symptoms.

****Close Contacts**

A close contact is any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before the person became sick (or 2 days before specimen collection if asymptomatic) until the person was isolated.

*****Ending Self-Isolation**

Persons with COVID-19 symptoms who were directed to care for themselves at home may end self-isolation when:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery meaning:
 - Fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications and
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms may discontinue self-isolation when at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.