



Update on COVID-19 Preparedness - March 10, 2020

A message to all CMH team members from John Alexander, MD, MHCM, FACEP, Chief Medical Officer, Central Maine Healthcare

This is the daily update on the rapidly evolving situation around COVID-19, also known as coronavirus.

- **Still no cases in Maine.** According to the Maine CDC in its briefing today, of 20 recent tests for COVID-19, all were negative for the virus. There are about 10 tests pending.
- Today, Central Maine Healthcare submitted its first testing for COVID-19 to the Maine CDC, based on a patient with recent residence in a high-risk country, presenting with mild and improving respiratory symptoms. The patient had been self-quarantined and was discharged home to continue their recovery.
- Several other patients have presented with symptoms that required a secondary level of screening but did not require testing.
- The test requires an oral pharyngeal/swab and a nasal pharyngeal swab. If an additional respiratory panel is desired a, second nasopharyngeal swab is required. If obtaining testing swabs, full PPE and negative pressure should be employed.
- Process for clinicians ordering testing has not changed and requires calling ahead to Infection Prevention, who will in turn contact the Maine CDC.
- Central Maine Healthcare is continuing to work with the guidance of the Maine and Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Today, a CMH team met with elected officials and first responder leadership from Lewiston, Auburn, Bridgton and Rumford to align communications and planning. Weekly conference calls with the same stakeholders will provide updates going forward.
- Bates College has let us know that they will continue this semester's classes; other colleges and universities around New England have suspended on-campus classes and activities ahead of spring vacations, in order to minimize the risk of students exposed while traveling returning to campus.
- An incident command team has been established at CMH, and will be able to scale up quickly if necessary. The team focus is on updating current policies, procedures and communications and developing our contingency plans in the event an outbreak should occur.
- Our long-term care facilities, Bolster Heights in Auburn and Rumford Community Home, are strongly urging families and friends to postpone visits. Senior citizens and immune compromised individuals are at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Maine Urgent Care at Topsham and the North Bridgton Walk-In Clinic now have working negative pressure rooms, allowing them to perform testing should clinical circumstances warrant. Patients

contacting practices with mild symptoms or concern for risk of Covid-19 exposure should be directed to one of these two sites after consultation with Infection Prevention. Severely ill patients should be directed to one of our three emergency departments.

- We continue to ask staff who have recently returned from any international travel to self-report to Occupational Health. We are suspending business travel outside of the state of Maine.
- The flu continues to be widespread in our community. We continue to ask staff members with significant respiratory symptoms or fever to remain home. Staff members who have mild respiratory symptoms are required to mask, and all staff members are required to observe hand hygiene before and after patient contact.

We will be providing daily updates to all staff members to ensure your safety and the safety of our patients, visitors, and community. Thank you again for your dedication to providing compassionate care for our patients.

For more information, please access the public website at www.cmhc.org, as well as the portal under Organization Resources > Infection Prevention and Control > Active Emerging Infections.

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