

Ohio Department of Health Public Health Laboratory Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Testing Procedures

March 7, 2020

ODH COVID-19 Testing Overview

The Ohio Department of Health Public Health Laboratory (ODHL) is providing targeted testing of those patients who are most severely ill and who pose the greatest risk of transmission to others. ODH adapted this algorithm to provide adequate surveillance capabilities so that local health partners could identify COVID-19 cases in their counties. The ODHL is designed primarily to meet surveillance needs, and not to provide comprehensive diagnostic services.

The goal of the current ODHL testing guidance is to identify the following cases of COVID-19: severe cases and individuals at high-risk for complications. The testing of possible cases directly exposed to other confirmed cases can assist health departments with limiting disease spread by facilitating effective quarantine and isolation strategies. The detection of severe cases will assist health care institutions with effective treatment and surveillance options for those high-risk individuals that are infected as well as for those who may have been exposed.

For testing at ODHL, the patient must meet one of the following criteria:

- Patient has fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness, (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) **AND** has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset.
- Patient has fever and signs/symptoms or lower respiratory illness, (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) **AND** a history of travel from affected geographic areas with widespread or sustained community transmission within 14 days of symptom onset **AND** is hospitalized.
- Patient has fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS as evidenced by imaging) **AND** lack of alternative diagnosis (e.g., negative respiratory viral panel, negative rapid flu) **AND** is hospitalized.