

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities
FROM: Laura Ann Nicolai, Deputy State Epidemiologist

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Provider Update

SUMMARY – An outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China continues to grow. People with 2019-nCoV infections have been identified in China and a [growing number of international locations](#), including the United States. Person-to-person spread has been reported in the U.S. and other countries. Globally, reported illnesses in people with 2019-nCoV have ranged from mild to severe, including death.

This guidance supersedes a [January 23, 2020 Health Department Health Advisory](#) and provides recommendations and requested actions for health care providers for the management of patients suspected to have 2019-nCoV infection.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

Identify:

- Ask all patients about travel in the previous 14 days. If they traveled to China, **document the last date they were in China and call the Health Department at 802-863-7240 (24/7).**
- Ask all patients who have traveled to China in the previous 14 days about respiratory symptoms. Instruct patients with respiratory illness to wear a face mask at triage.
- Ask about known contact with anyone diagnosed with 2019-nCoV.
- Use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [Person Under Investigation \(PUI\)](#) guidance to evaluate the patient for 2019-nCoV risk and testing.

Isolate:

- Separate people with suspected 2019-nCoV from other people in the waiting area. Provide easy access to respiratory hygiene supplies (60-95% alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, no touch receptacles and face masks) and a well-ventilated space at least 6 feet from others.
- Triage and place patients with suspected 2019-nCoV in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR) with the door closed.
- If there is no AIIR and the patient requires hospitalization, transfer patients to a facility with an AIIR.
- If there is no AIIR and the patient is stable and can be discharged home, keep them in a single room with the door closed wearing a mask until they can be discharged.

Inform:

- **Report suspect cases immediately to the Health Department by calling 802-863-7240 (24/7).**
- Report suspected cases to your infection preventionist.

2019-nCoV Testing:

- Consult the Health Department at 802-863-7240 (24/7) to determine if testing is recommended. If indicated, the Health Department will coordinate shipping specimens to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory.
- Collect upper and lower respiratory specimens. [Detailed guidance](#) for collecting, handling, and testing clinical specimens is available from the CDC.
- Collect specimens as soon as possible once a Patient Under Investigation is identified, regardless of time of symptom onset.
- Evaluate patients for other causes of respiratory infection as clinically indicated. Testing for other respiratory pathogens should not delay specimen collection for 2019-nCoV testing.
- For biosafety reasons, it is not recommended to perform virus isolation in cell culture or initial characterization of viral agents recovered in cultures of specimens from a Patient Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV.

Infection Prevention:

- [CDC recommends](#) the use of eye protection and adherence to standard, contact, and airborne precautions.
- Encourage people with respiratory symptoms to follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (placing a mask over nose and mouth) and hand hygiene while they are in the health care facility.
- Consider posting information to remind people with respiratory symptoms to wear a mask, practice respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and hand hygiene.

Clinical Management and Treatment:

- [Interim clinical guidance](#) is available from the CDC. This will be updated as more information becomes available.
- Clinical presentation among reported cases of 2019-nCoV infection varies in severity from asymptomatic infection or mild illness to severe or fatal illness.
- Some reports suggest the potential for clinical deterioration during the second week of illness.
- No specific treatment for 2019-nCoV infection is currently available. Clinical management includes prompt implementation of recommended infection prevention and control measures and supportive management of complications, including advanced organ support if indicated.
- Corticosteroids should be avoided unless indicated for other reasons (for example, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease exacerbation or septic shock per [Surviving Sepsis guidelines](#)), because of the potential for prolonging viral replication as observed in MERS-CoV patients.

Discharge Planning:

- Before discharging a Patient Under Investigation, consult with the Health Department to assure that any post-discharge public health follow-up has been arranged. The decision to monitor a patient in the inpatient or outpatient setting should be made with the Health Department on a case-by-case basis.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and INFORMATION – Recommendations are likely to change as the situation develops. We encourage providers to consult the resources below for additional information.

- [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) (CDC)
- [Flowchart to Identify and Assess 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) (CDC)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Confirmed 2019 Novel Coronavirus or Persons Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV in Healthcare Settings](#) (CDC)
- [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible 2019-nCoV Infection](#) (CDC)
- [Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed 2019 Novel Coronavirus Infection](#) (CDC)
- [Interim Considerations for Disposition of Hospitalized Patients with 2019-nCoV Infection](#) (CDC)
- [Hospital and Healthcare Professionals Preparedness Checklists](#) (CDC)
- [Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) (CDC)
- [Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) (CDC)
- [Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPS\) for 2019-nCoV in the United States](#) (CDC)
- [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#) (CDC)

If you have any questions, contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.