Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance and Collection Kit Ordering Information

Note: This Health Update has been revised to include the correct diagnostic code for asymptomatic screening.

Background
Nasal swabs for COVID-19 specimen collection are now more available to health care providers in Vermont. University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMMC) and the Health Department will be dispensing both nasal swabs & nasopharyngeal swabs to hospitals, primary care and Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) practices.

Requested Action:

1. Test or refer for testing any patient who:
   - Has symptoms of COVID-19, or
   - Had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or
   - Is in quarantine due to travel and would like to end quarantine early.

   Primary care providers can refer patients to their local hospital collection locations, a third-party commercial collection location or collect specimens within their own facilities.

2. Order COVID-19 specimen collection kits – both nasopharyngeal and nares swabs – through the appropriate channel.
   - UVMMC Primary Care Providers:
     - Order test kits through UVMMC. If you do not already have that process in place, please contact UVMMC Laboratory Customer Service at (802) 847-5121 or (800) 991-2799.
   - FQHCs, Long-term Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Pediatric Practices, and all Primary Care Providers not already working with UVMMC:
     - Order test kits through the Health Department Laboratory.
   - Other types of providers should order test kits through commercial channels.

More Information:
- Information on reimbursement for COVID-19 testing:
The cost of COVID-19 testing and treatment services for uninsured people can be covered by the HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program.

For patients with commercial insurance, the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation has mandated that coverage include asymptomatic screening using the diagnostic code z11.59.

Medicaid released specific information on coverage of FDA-authorized COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic and symptomatic patients ordered by health care providers. Office and hospital charges associated with COVID-19 testing will be covered without member cost-sharing when the primary diagnosis is related to testing.

Medicare will cover in vitro diagnostic products (as defined in Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations) for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 or diagnosis of COVID-19, and the administration of those diagnostic products. CMS also provided more information about provider reimbursement available for counseling patients to self-isolate at the time of COVID-19 testing.

- Read the new State of Vermont Testing Plan.
- Find translated COVID-19 materials to share with your patients.

If you have any questions, please 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.