

Ohio Department of Health (ODH)

Public Health Laboratory Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Testing Procedures

March 20, 2020

ODH COVID-19 Testing Overview

The Ohio Department of Health Public Health Laboratory (ODHL) continues to provide targeted testing of those patients who are most severely ill and who pose the greatest risk of transmission to others. ODH adapted these testing procedures 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: those who are most severely ill and professionals who are critical to providing care and service to those who are ill. This approach will allow for the most appropriate use of the available resources.

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

- Patient has fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness, (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) **AND** is either a healthcare worker with direct patient care or in a public safety occupation (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS) **AND** has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset.
- Patient has fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness, (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) **AND** is a resident of long-term care facility (LTCF) **AND** is hospitalized.
- Patient has fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS as evidenced by imaging) **AND** is hospitalized **AND** the healthcare provider has a high clinical suspicion of COVID-19 after thorough evaluation (i.e., no alternative plausible diagnosis).
- Other special circumstances where there is a requirement for prompt receipt of results such as patients involved in an illness cluster in a facility or group (e.g., healthcare, corrections).