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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Local Health Departments & Regional Offices of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Hospital Laboratories, Hospital Administrators, PIOs, ED Personnel, Nursing Directors, EMS Staff, Laboratory Staff, ID/INEDSS, EMS Partners and IL Local EMAs

**FROM:** E. Matt Charles  
Chief, Division of Laboratories *SMC*

**DATE:** March 13, 2020

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Sample Submission to IDPH

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The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Division of Laboratories is now testing for COVID-19 at all three of its laboratories located in Carbondale, Chicago and Springfield. **Effective 3/13/20, IDPH will only test NP swabs for initial patient screening.** Below contains updated guidance for specimen testing at IDPH Laboratories. **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

### Specimens to be Collected:

**As of 3/12/2020, the CDC updated guidance to recommend collecting only the nasopharyngeal (NP) swab.** Collecting both NP and oropharyngeal (OP) is no longer recommended. **Please only send one (1) NP swab per patient.** This recommendation only applies when samples are tested with the CDC Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) assay, CDC 2019-Novel Coronavirus Real-Time PCR Diagnostic panel. This is the assay used by the Illinois Public Health Laboratories. When using other laboratories or other assays, please consult recommendations for specimen types and handling that are specific to those assays. If the patient is positive on the initial screening performed at the IDPH Laboratories, additional specimens may be requested, such as sputum and serum. Please do not send these samples until requested.

### Forms to Include with Specimens:

All submissions require approval from the Local Health Department which will provide a patient-specific authorization number. Each specimen should have its own [Communicable Disease Laboratory Test Requisition Form](#). Prior to submission, ensure all sections of the form are complete as missing fields may delay testing. The authorization code should be placed at the top of the form.

### Laboratory Turn Around Time (TAT):

The published TAT is 3 days for this test. Currently, IDPH labs are able to provide results for most specimens 1-2 days after specimen receipt. The laboratories are performing testing Monday through Saturday. Sunday testing is only permitted if a critical need arises.

Please refer to prior guidance from IDPH regarding appropriate swabs, storage temperatures and shipping. If you have specific questions relating to the content of this communication, please contact

Kristin Goldesberry (Springfield Laboratory Manager) at 217-524-6228, Chris Vogt (Carbondale Supervisor) at 618-457-5131 or Dr. Mohammad Nasir (Chicago Laboratory Manager) at 312-793-4760. Contact your Local Health Department to discuss any Persons Under Investigation.