

Health Advisory: Mass Gathering Testing for SARS-CoV-2

Minnesota Department of Health, Tue, June 2 14:00 CDT 2020

Action Steps

Local and tribal health department: Please forward to hospitals, clinics, urgent care centers, emergency departments, and convenience clinics in your jurisdiction.

Hospitals, clinics and other facilities: Please forward to infection preventionists, infectious disease physicians, emergency department staff, hospitalists, primary care clinicians, and all other health care providers who might see patients with acute respiratory symptoms.

Health care providers:

- Test people who were involved in mass public events, beginning May 25th.
- Test First Responders and other who responded to events beginning May 25th. Continue to test people in the priority testing groups (see below).
- Report cases of COVID-19 to MDH at 651-201-5414 or 877-676-5414.

Background

The Minnesota Department of Health is recommending expanding COVID-19 testing due to recent mass events, civil unrest and the response to the civil unrest that occurred across the state beginning May 25, 2020. Even if there was little activity in your community, because Minnesotans traveled from around the state to participate, any community could see an increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases.

Thousands of people may have been exposed to COVID-19 due to the large concentration of people in one area. Identifying and testing individuals who may have participated in a large public event will improve the ability to identify cases and institute appropriate isolation and quarantine measures.

Testing Criteria

Social Protest Participants and/or participants in related events

People who have participated in any large gatherings including but not limited to protests, community clean up and recovery efforts, vigils, neighborhood defense meetings (both those with symptoms and those who are asymptomatic). This also includes first responders and others who responded to the events.

Symptomatic People

Symptomatic people across the continuum of care (including hospitalized, long-term and transitional care and ambulatory care) and symptomatic healthcare workers.

Asymptomatic People in Congregate Settings

Congregate living settings including long term care facilities, shelters, and prisons. Testing should be done according to guidance issued by MDH.

Staff Working in High Risk Settings

Employees working in high risk areas, including those working in hospital/clinic settings where

there is direct contact with COVID-19 patients, those working in long-term care facilities, shelter workers, and prison guards. It is likely that some people will need testing on a regular basis because of repeated high-risk exposures in the workplace. If a point-prevalence survey is done in a facility, staff should be included as part of the prioritization for the facility-wide testing. If not testing everyone, prioritize:

1. Symptomatic staff
2. Asymptomatic staff ending their quarantine period
3. Asymptomatic staff who work in a facility that has COVID-19 cases

Cluster Investigations

Cluster investigations where groups of people are associated with a case of COVID-19, even if a direct contact isn't identified. This could include specific workplace-wide or facility-wide clusters implicated to have outbreaks of COVID-19. The testing approach should be done in consultation with MDH.

Asymptomatic People Requiring Medical Care

Examples include: Patients planning to undergo an aerosol-generating procedure (procedure involving the airway or esophagus such as intubation, bronchoscopy, upper esophageal endoscopy, dental procedures, etc.), or patients undergoing other procedures that may be delayed based on testing results (patients undergoing procedures like chemotherapy, cardiac surgery, or other procedures in which COVID-19 infection may worsen outcome) or patients admitted to the hospital.

Asymptomatic Mission-Critical Workers

Public utility workers essential to maintain critical infrastructure if requested by utility. Other critical sector workers include health care, first responders, National Guard, mass transit, grocery store, food processing, health care and other critical supply manufacturing and distribution, and governmental employees.

For More Information

- [MDH Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)
- [CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 webpage](#)
- Call MDH at 651-201-5414 or 877-676-5414.

A copy of this HAN is available at: MDH Health Alert Network

The content of this message is intended for public health and health care personnel and response partners who have a need to know the information to perform their duties.