

3/12/2020

Colleagues,

I'm writing to inform you of the work we are doing at the Saginaw County Health Department (SCHD) in response to COVID-19. On March 12, the SCHD administration met with five Saginaw County health centers (Covenant, CMU, Great Lakes Bay, Ascension St. Mary's and SCHD) to determine the best way to access COVID-19 testing for you and your patients. As you know, the decreasing availability of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) has made it more difficult to adequately protect Health Care Providers (HCP). We, at the SCHD, are working as liaisons between these organizations to put forth a joint plan for community testing. Our goal is to protect the HCPs and patients of Saginaw County, and play an advisory role to you when you are considering testing.

To better help with your questions, we have developed a hotline for you and your patients to call if you have any questions: **989-758-3828, after hours phone number 989-776-5444**. This 24-hour hotline will be available for use starting Monday, March 16, 2020.

At this time, we are telling patients not to go to Med Express or ER for testing unless they have emergent needs. We are encouraging them to call you for evaluation and treatment. Consider testing for flu and other infections prior to ordering COVID-19 testing.

Next week, I will be in follow-up communication with the five health centers to determine the capacity to test in our area. After that time, I will be able to provide you with possible testing sites. If you decide to test individuals in your office, you will be required to obtain a nasal swab of the patient. Please use the appropriate PPE when interacting with these patients. Test swabs and transport medium can be obtained from **Quest Labs** and **Lab Corp** locally. Specific packaging guidelines must be followed to ensure a quality sample. Click on the lab name above for details.

The following are CDC recommendations for COVID-19 testing:

Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing). Priorities for testing may include:

1. Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 in order to inform decisions related to infection control.
2. Other symptomatic individuals, such as older adults and individuals with chronic medical conditions and/or an immunocompromised state that may put them at higher risk for poor outcomes (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, receiving immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease).
3. Any persons including healthcare personnel, who within 14 days of symptom onset had close contact with a suspect or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient, or who have a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of their symptom onset.

[**Click HERE for information from the CDC on Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Settings.**](#) Click on the following for:

[Information on cleaning products that will be effective against COVID-19](#)

[Local health department phone numbers](#)

[MDHHS Healthcare Provider Notification](#)

I'm here as a resource if needed,



Delicia J. Pruitt MD, FAAFP

Medical Director

Saginaw County Health Department