



## HEALTH ADVISORY: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

March 12, 2020

**Summary:** Amarillo Public Health continues to monitor an outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus) that originated in Wuhan City, China in December of 2019. To date, there are **no confirmed cases in Potter or Randall Counties**. We do recognize that at some point in the future the area will experience a person(s) with a positive test result. We encourage you to continue to review and practice your facility/agencies' response plans.

**Primary Care Providers:** To reduce burden on the emergency healthcare system, recommendations for primary care clinics to evaluate patients are below. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html> - for full recommendations

- Triage patients via phone. If necessary, schedule an appointment for the patient to be evaluated for respiratory infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath). A history of exposure to COVID-19, including travel history, should be included in triage protocol.
- Give the patient a facemask and place in an exam room, with the door closed, immediately upon arrival. Avoid having the patient in the waiting room.
- Consider limiting points of entry to the facility.
- Healthcare provider (HCP) should use hand hygiene and PPE (N95, gloves, gown, eye protection) to examine patient. Limit number of HCP who see patient.
- Rule out other causes of infection: flu, strep, respiratory panel, other point of care testing available.
- If all point of care testing is negative and COVID-19 testing is indicated
  - Nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab along with a lower respiratory sample (sputum, tracheal aspirate, bronchoalveolar lavage) collected.
  - NP and OP swabs must be collected only on synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts placed in viral transport media.
  - HCP should wear all PPE during specimen collection.
- If patient is tested for COVID-19, they should be isolated to home (if medically appropriate) until test results return.
- Specimen can be sent to commercial labs (LabCorp) or the State LRN lab in Lubbock.

### Testing:

Commercial labs: specimen should be collected at healthcare facilities and sent via courier to LabCorp.

If a provider tests through LabCorp, it is important to report to Amarillo Public Health that the test was sent and the results of the test. Reports can be made via fax 806-378-6307 or phone 806-378-6321.

### State LRN Lab Lubbock:

- Rule out other causes of infection
- Contact Public Health – Business hours 806-378-6321, After hours 806-680-8980
- Collect specimen

### Amarillo Public Health

Amarillo Area Public Health District  
1000 Martin Road, Amarillo, TX 79107  
(806) 378-6300  
[amarillopublichealth.org](http://amarillopublichealth.org)



### **Nursing homes and long-term care facilities:**

- Facilities should:
  - Send letters or emails to families advising them to consider postponing or using alternative methods for visitation (e.g., video conferencing) during the next several months.
  - Post signs at the entrances to the facility instructing visitors to not enter if they have fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection. Consider having visitors sign visitor logs in case contact tracing becomes necessary.
  - Ask all visitors about fever or symptoms of respiratory infection. Restrict anyone with:
    - Fever or symptoms of respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath).
    - International travel within the last 14 days to affected countries. Information on high-risk countries is available on CDC's [COVID-19 travel website](#).
    - Contact with an individual with COVID-19.
- When allowed, visitors should be encouraged to frequently perform hand hygiene and limit their movement and interactions with others in the facility (e.g., confine themselves to the resident's room).

**Public Health Response:** We anticipate cases of COVID-19 in our community. Rapid isolation of people being tested will help mitigate the spread. Once cases are identified in Potter and Randall counties, Public Health will provide contact investigation to quarantine necessary contacts, ensure testing is arranged for persons in need, and continue to be in contact with stakeholders and the community.

### **Prevention:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water on a regular basis.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue in the trash.
- Follow recommendations from the CDC for using a facemask.

### **Guidance: CDC/DSHS**

- Health care professionals: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/#healthprof>
- EMS Systems: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/#ems>
- Community and school information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/preparing-individuals-communities.html>

Questions or requests for additional information can be directed to Mark Price (806-378-6336) after hours emergencies (806-680-8980).