Priorities for Testing Patients with Suspected COVID-19 Infection

**Priority 1**
Ensures optimal care options for all hospitalized patients, lessen the risk of healthcare-associated infections, and maintain the integrity of the U.S. healthcare system.
- Hospitalized patients
- Healthcare facility workers with symptoms

**Priority 2**
Ensures those at highest risk of complication of infection are rapidly identified and appropriately triaged.
- Patients in long-term care facilities with symptoms
- Patients 65 years of age and older with symptoms
- Patients with underlying conditions with symptoms
- First responders with symptoms

**Priority 3**
As resources allow, test individuals in the surrounding community of rapidly increasing hospital cases to decrease community spread, and ensure health of essential workers.
- Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms
- Individuals who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms
- Individuals with mild symptoms in communities experiencing high numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations

Testing
Collection of diagnostic respiratory specimens (e.g., nasopharyngeal swab) should be performed in a normal examination room with the door closed.

- The health care provider is responsible for specimen collection, handling and shipping. Please follow CDC guidance.
- Priority 1 and Priority 2 specimens should be processed within your health care facility, if available; a commercial laboratory (e.g., LabCorp and Quest), or the Florida Bureau of Public Health Laboratory (BPHL).
  - Before sending specimens to BPHL, contact your local county health department (CHD) Epidemiology Contacts.
- Priority 3 specimens can be processed within your health care facility, if available; or a commercial laboratory (e.g., LabCorp and Quest).
- Health care providers may consult a local CHD for additional guidance as needed.

Additional Guidance
Providers are encouraged to frequently monitor Florida Department of Health and CDC websites for updated guidance on COVID-19.
- [www.flhealth.gov](http://www.flhealth.gov)

Please see the CDC’s Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings.