

HEALTH ADVISORY: Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) January 21, 2020

Background:

An outbreak of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan City, China was initially reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on December 31, 2019. Chinese health authorities identified the cause of the outbreak as a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). While originally thought to be spreading from animal-to-person, there are growing indications that limited person-to-person spread is happening. It is unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people. Currently, close to 300 human infections have been confirmed in China; additionally, cases have been confirmed in Thailand, Japan, Korea, and the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the first case of 2019-nCoV in the United States on January 21, 2020. The patient recently returned to the state of Washington from Wuhan on January 15, 2020. The patient sought care at a medical facility in the state of Washington, where the patient was treated for the illness. Based on the patient's travel history and symptoms, healthcare professionals suspected this new coronavirus. A clinical specimen was collected and sent to CDC overnight, where laboratory testing on Monday, January 20, 2020 confirmed the diagnosis via CDC's Real time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (rRT-PCR) test.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers

Limited information is available to characterize the spectrum of clinical illness associated with 2019-nCoV. No vaccine or specific treatment for 2019-nCoV infection is available; care is supportive.

The CDC clinical criteria for a 2019-nCoV patient under investigation (PUI) have been developed based on what is known about MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV and are subject to change as additional information becomes available.

Healthcare providers should obtain a detailed travel history for patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness. CDC guidance for evaluating and reporting a PUI for MERS-CoV remains unchanged.

Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Patients Under Investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV

The criteria to guide evaluation of a PUI are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/clinical-criteria.html>. The criteria are intended to serve as guidance for evaluation. Patients should be evaluated and discussed with public health departments on a case-by-case basis if their clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal (e.g., uncertain travel or exposure).

Criteria to Guide Evaluation of PUI for 2019-nCoV (continued)

Patients in the United States who meet either of the following criteria should be evaluated as a PUI in association with the outbreak of 2019-nCoV in Wuhan City, China.

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing)	and	In the last 14 days before symptom onset, a history of travel from Wuhan City, China. – <i>or</i> – In the last 14 days before symptom onset, close contact with a person who is under investigation for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill.
Fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing)	and	In the last 14 days, close contact with an ill laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient.

Recommendations for Reporting, Testing, and Specimen Collection

Healthcare providers should immediately notify both infection control personnel at their healthcare facility and their local health department in the event of a PUI for 2019-nCoV. Testing can only be done at CDC. Specimen collection and shipping must be coordinated with your local health department. To increase the likelihood of detecting 2019-nCoV infection, CDC recommends collecting and testing multiple clinical specimens from different sites, including all three specimen types—lower respiratory, upper respiratory, and serum specimens.

For questions or to report a suspected case, please contact your local health department:

Bexar County Residents:

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
Epidemiology Program
Phone: (210) 207-8876
Fax: (210) 207-8807

Residents of Other Counties:

Texas Department of State Health Services
Public Health Region 8
Phone: (210) 949-2121
Fax: (210) 692-1457