

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities
FROM: Mark Levine, MD, Health Commissioner

Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance and Collection Kit Ordering Information

Note: This Health Update has been revised to include the correct diagnostic code for asymptomatic screening.

Background

Nasal swabs for COVID-19 specimen collection are now more available to health care providers in Vermont. University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMCC) and the Health Department will be dispensing both nasal swabs & nasopharyngeal swabs to hospitals, primary care and Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) practices.

Requested Action:

1. Test or refer for testing any patient who:

- Has symptoms of COVID-19, or
- Had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or
- Is in quarantine due to travel and would like to end quarantine early.

Primary care providers can refer patients to their local hospital collection locations, a third-party commercial collection location or collect specimens within their own facilities.

2. Order COVID-19 specimen collection kits – both nasopharyngeal and nares swabs – through the appropriate channel.

- **UVMCC Primary Care Providers:**
 - Order test kits through UVMCC. If you do not already have that process in place, please contact UVMCC Laboratory Customer Service at (802) 847-5121 or (800) 991-2799.
- **FQHCs, Long-term Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Pediatric Practices, and all Primary Care Providers not already working with UVMCC:**
 - Order test kits through the [Health Department Laboratory](#).
- Other types of providers should order test kits through commercial channels.

More Information:

- Information on **reimbursement for COVID-19 testing:**

- The cost of COVID-19 testing and treatment services for **uninsured people** can be covered by the [HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program](#).
 - For patients with **commercial insurance**, the [Vermont Department of Financial Regulation](#) has mandated that coverage include asymptomatic screening using the **diagnostic code z11.59**.
 - [Medicaid](#) released specific information on coverage of FDA-authorized COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic and symptomatic patients ordered by health care providers. Office and hospital charges associated with COVID-19 testing will be covered without member cost-sharing when the primary diagnosis is related to testing.
 - [Medicare](#) will cover in vitro diagnostic products (as defined in Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations) for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 or diagnosis of COVID-19, and the administration of those diagnostic products. CMS also provided more information about [provider reimbursement](#) available for counseling patients to self-isolate at the time of COVID-19 testing.
- Read the new [State of Vermont Testing Plan](#).
 - Find [translated COVID-19 materials](#) to share with your patients.

If you have any questions, please contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.