



Date: March 19 2020
To: San Joaquin County Medical Community
From: Maggie Park, MD, Interim Health Officer

COVID-19 Update: Laboratory Testing and Isolation Clearance

Laboratory Testing for COVID-19:

San Joaquin County Public Health Services (SJCPHS) no longer has clinic services. Therefore people who have symptoms of COVID-19 need to contact their medical care providers for evaluation. If the medical evaluation indicates that COVID-19 testing is needed, the medical care provider needs to work within their medical care system to collect the specimen and send it to a lab for testing.

- For outpatients, send specimens to a commercial laboratory. Several large commercial laboratories are now providing testing for COVID-19. At this time the San Joaquin Public Health Laboratory is focusing on testing hospitalized patients.
- Only a nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen is needed. Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Place swab into a sterile tube containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media.
- People who are asymptomatic **do not** need testing.
- Clinical judgement should be used regarding the need for testing people with mild symptoms.
- Report all COVID-19 positive patients to SJCPHS -
 - During normal business hours call SJCPHS at 209/468-3822.
 - Fax a copy of the patient's lab report and a completed Confidential Morbidity Report to 209/468-8222. (CMR http://www.sjcphs.org/disease/disease_control_reporting.aspx)

Isolation and Clearance:

- Advise patients who do not need hospital care to self-isolate at home.
- Patients who either have laboratory confirmed COVID-19 or those with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 can be cleared from isolation as follows:
 - After 7 days from the start of their symptoms **AND** 3 days after their fever and acute symptoms have resolved (like body aches, etc.), whichever is longer.
 - Persons who work in health care may be allowed to return to work but must wear a face mask until any lingering cough has resolved.
 - Health care workers are restrict from working in oncology, transplant or hematology for an additional 14 days.