



**Public Health Department**

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[buttecounty.net/publichealth](http://buttecounty.net/publichealth)

## Health Advisory

To: Butte County Clinicians and Health Care providers  
From: Andy Miller, M.D. (signed original on file)  
Date: January 31, 2020  
Re: **Updated Guidance** for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (nCoV)

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### Background

**There are currently no persons under investigation (PUI) or confirmed cases in Butte County.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. As of Jan 30, 2020 there were more than 9,000 confirmed cases in more than 20 countries worldwide. The first case in the United States was announced on January 21, 2020. To date, there are 6 total cases in the US, (2) of which are in California. Person to person transmission to a close family contact was documented in the US on Jan 30. The risk of 2019-nCoV illness to the Butte County community remains very low at this time. As a reminder, both influenza A and influenza B viruses continue to circulate widely in Butte County.

### Criteria for a Person Under Investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV

- Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) and any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient within 14 days of symptom onset; or
- Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) and a history of travel from Hubei Province, China within 14 days of symptom onset; or
- Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization and a history of travel from mainland China within 14 days of symptoms onset.

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).

For the most up-to-date guidance see [Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Patients Under Investigation \(PUI\) for 2019-nCoV](#).

## Actions Requested of Providers

- Immediately report, to Butte County Public Health (BCPH), any patients that meet criteria for patients under investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV. Approval from BCPH is required before specimens can be submitted to CDC for testing. All 2019-nCoV laboratory testing is currently performed by the CDC at this time.
- Review the specimen collection instructions carefully to ensure correct and adequate samples are collected to increase the likelihood of detecting infection.
- Obtain a detailed travel history from the patient including cities and provinces if they recently traveled to China.
- **For assistance in assessing and managing suspect cases, call the BCPH Communicable Disease Program**
  - During business hours, Mon- Fri (8 am-5 pm): (530) 552-3929
  - For after hours, weekends, or holidays: (530) 332-2462

## Infection Control Guidelines

- A patient under investigation (PUI) should wear a surgical mask and be evaluated in a private room with door closed (ideally an airborne infection isolation room if available).
- Healthcare personnel should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and eye protection.
- The facility's infection control personnel should be notified immediately of a PUI case.

For more infection control guidance, please refer to CDC's [Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#).

## Laboratory/Specimen Collection

**Collection of upper respiratory, lower respiratory, and serum specimens for testing is recommended.** Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a PUI case is identified regardless of symptom onset. Proper infection control measures should be used when collecting specimens. A BCPH laboratory form must be completed and submitted with patient specimens for 2019-nCoV testing. Refrigerate specimens at 2-8 degrees C and ship to BCPH Laboratory at 695 Oleander Ave in Chico. Routine respiratory testing MUST NOT delay shipment of the specimens. BCPH lab personnel will package and ship to the CDC for 2019-nCoV diagnostic testing.

Recommended specimens for 2019-nCoV testing are:

- Upper respiratory tract specimens
  - (1) nasopharyngeal (NP) swab and (1) oropharyngeal (OP) swab. Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing. Place swabs immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media. NP and OP specimens should be kept in separate vials.
- Lower respiratory tract specimens
  - Bronchoalveolar lavage or tracheal aspirate (ONLY if clinically indicated): collect 2-3 ml into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container.

- Sputum: Have patient rinse mouth with water then expectorate deep cough sputum directly into sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. **No induced sputum.**
- Serum
  - Children and adults: collect (1) tube (5-10 ml) of whole blood in a serum separator tube.
  - Infant: a minimum of (1) ml of whole blood is needed for testing pediatric patients. If possible, collect (1) ml in a serum separator tube.
  - Serum separator tubes should be stored upright for at least 30 minutes, and then centrifuged at 1000-1300 relative centrifugal force (RCF) for 10 minutes before removing the serum and placing it in a separate sterile tube for shipping (such as cryovial).

For more laboratory information, please refer to the [CDC interim guidelines for specimen collection for 2019-nCoV](#). Please visit the [CDC laboratory biosafety guidelines](#) for handling and processing of specimens.

**Categories of urgency levels:**

**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.