



COVID-19 Testing Prioritization Guidance

Approved by State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) - 3/23/2020

Background

Shortages of nasal swabs and testing reagents in the United States continue to hamper the ability to roll out widespread COVID-19 testing. In addition, personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages are ongoing. While supplies may soon become more readily available, or alternative specimen collection or testing methodologies may emerge, it is necessary until then to promote a unified statewide approach to testing prioritization.

Public health priorities include:

- Prioritizing PPE use for critical patient care activities
- Ensuring that COVID-19 cases are rapidly identified in populations where more intensive public health interventions are required, for example:
 - Members of the healthcare workforce, first responders or critical infrastructure personnel*
 - Individuals living in congregate settings like skilled nursing facilities, prisons, and residential facilities with older adults
 - Individuals hospitalized with respiratory symptoms

While some communities may have sufficient testing supplies and/or PPE to expand COVID-19 testing to other groups, mass testing of any Arizonan for COVID-19 at this time will quickly deplete the existing supply of testing reagents, laboratory supplies, and PPE needed to manage patients in clinical, in-patient and other residential settings.

Guidance

At this time, the goal of testing should be to limit potential introduction of COVID-19 in healthcare and congregate settings and vulnerable populations.

- Public health and healthcare professionals should prioritize testing among three specific groups until sufficient and consistent PPE, testing supplies and capacity are widely available:
 1. Healthcare workers, first responders, and employer identified critical infrastructure personnel* with COVID-19 symptoms
 2. Individuals living in congregate settings with symptoms of COVID-19
 3. Individuals hospitalized with respiratory symptoms
- Community-based COVID-19 testing (drive-through, walk-up, etc.) should be focused on making tests available to the three priority groups above.
- Healthy individuals do not require testing. These individuals should practice social-distancing and follow the recommendations of their local and state public health authorities.

*Critical infrastructure personnel are based on the CISA Infrastructure Sectors: Chemical, Emergency Services, Energy, Nuclear, Water

- Individuals with mild illness should stay at home, practice self isolation, monitor their health and manage their symptoms using self-care, and contact their health care provider if their symptoms get worse. Telehealth options should be considered where available.

