

June 8, 2020

Dear Healthcare Provider,

In the District of Columbia, we have begun our transition into our phased reopening and in recent days many residents and employees in the District of Columbia have returned to work. This increased activity may result in more of your patients contacting your office inquiring about their risk of exposure to COVID-19 and a need for testing for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. While some may believe that the risk for transmission in our community has decreased, I write to encourage you to continue to be vigilant as a trusted healthcare provider to your patients.

Our testing strategy in the District of Columbia anticipates that healthcare providers throughout the community will continue to expand access to COVID-19 testing in the outpatient setting. If you are in need of testing supplies such as swabs and transport media (i.e. sampling kits), I encourage you to contact the commercial laboratories that you normally utilize to receive these supplies. If they are unable to provide you these resources, the District of Columbia Department of Forensic Sciences' Public Health Laboratory can provide you with these sampling kits free of charge. To receive sampling kits from DFS/PHL, please send an email to [DFS-COVID19@dc.gov](mailto:DFS-COVID19@dc.gov). Be sure to include the number of kits you are requesting, facility name, address, point of contact and phone number.

If you are using a rapid SARS-CoV-2 test to diagnose COVID-19 or if you are offering SARS-CoV-2 antibody testing to advise patients if they have been previously exposed to the virus in your office setting, please ensure that the test has been authorized by the FDA through the emergency use authorization (EUA) process. A number of tests that are not FDA approved are frequently marketed directly to physicians. These tests typically are high cost and are not of the same quality as laboratory tests. Please be reminded that all test results, positive and negative, must be reported to DC Health as per District law.

I recognize that access to sampling kits are not the only barrier healthcare providers face when choosing to offer testing to patients. In recent weeks, access to personal protective equipment (PPE) such as surgical masks, gowns, face shields, and gloves has improved. If you are continuing to experience challenges procuring PPE, the District of Columbia Hospital Association host the National Capital Area Shared Services Partnership to assist with your group purchasing needs. The partnership is open to all District of Columbia healthcare provider groups and practices. For more information contact John Norman [jnorman@dcha.org](mailto:jnorman@dcha.org). If you experience a PPE shortage while you await a shipment from your supplier, emergency assistance may be available from the District. Inquiries can be submitted to [dc.hmc@dc.gov](mailto:dc.hmc@dc.gov).

If you are unable to immediately offer testing to your patients, free options are available throughout the city to assist them. While you work to develop the capacity to offer testing within your practice, I want to make sure that you and your staff are familiar with all of the resources available to your patients. If a District resident, a healthcare worker providing healthcare services in a facility located in the District (regardless of residency), or critical infrastructure employee in the District (regardless of residency) needs a COVID-19 test, they can receive a free test at any of the testing sites hosted by the Government of the District of Columbia. The sites are operated Monday-Friday and can be found at [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing). Any person who receives a positive test at these testing sites will be notified directly of their result. DC Health will provide public health supervision to all COVID-19 patients who are residents of the District of Columbia and will coordinate their social support and human services needs; however, DC Health does not clinically manage COVID-19 patients. It is critically important that your patients be able to follow-up with you for all of their COVID-19 and chronic disease related healthcare needs.

For the latest and most up-to-date information on COVID-19 in the District of Columbia, visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

Thank you for continuing to serve on the frontlines of this response and for all you do to keep the residents of the District of Columbia healthy and safe!

Sincerely,

  
LaQuandra S. Nesbitt, MD, MPH  
Director