TESTING BULLETIN FOR GENERAL PUBLIC IN ELVPHD DISTRICT

There is a severe shortage in the ability for labs to process COVID-19 tests. This means that commercial labs and Nebraska Public Health Lab are overloaded beyond capacity and have an accumulation of tests waiting to be processed. This is due to too many tests being done on non-qualifying individuals.

Many patients and employers are reporting themselves or their employees having allegedly been exposed. Please know, that at the time of this writing, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Burt, Cuming, Stanton or Madison Counties. Further, to the best of our knowledge, there are no dates, locations or times where there were true exposures in any of these counties. This means that, of the confirmed COVID-19 patients living elsewhere in Nebraska, none reported during their investigation interview having visited any locations in Burt, Cuming, Stanton or Madison counties while they were ill. There are a lot of rumors circulating, and we need the help of the public to dispel those. Should a point of exposure, such as a public location, business or school be identified in the ELVPHD area, ELVPHD will notify the public directly in a statement from our department.

Regarding employers demanding/requiring their employees to be tested, this is contributing to an overload of tests hitting the labs. Lab results are being delayed on very ill people due to this inundation at the labs. Tests are ONLY being done according to the following criteria:

- Travelers from the linked geographic areas [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#alert](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#alert) (within 14 days of their symptom onset); OR
- Patients that are hospitalized with severe lower respiratory illness; OR
- Healthcare workers that are symptomatic; OR
- Symptomatic patients in public safety occupations (law enforcement, fire, EMS); OR
- Symptomatic patients that have been identified as a direct contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. Again, remember that there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases in the ELVPHD district; thus, there are no known points of exposure in the district; OR
- An illness cluster in a facility or institution (healthcare, school, corrections, shelters, etc.); OR
- Patients that meet ONE of the following:
  - Symptomatic people aged 60 years or older
  - Symptomatic patient with an underlying medical condition
  - Symptomatic pregnant women.

Young, healthy individuals with mild illness should not be tested and will be instructed to follow social isolation procedures if they are sick. Testing will not be done on persons without symptoms, and will not be done based upon employer recommendation or requirement. These tests require a medical evaluation and a provider’s order, and will not be done by general request. The eligibility criteria is really important in order to preserve state and commercial testing supplies, and to ensure that timely results for the most-critical patients can be received.

Providers are being encouraged to write notes to employers that his/her employee may not fit the testing criteria.