

DHHS PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

September 16, 2020



Dear Healthcare Providers:

As some schools resume in-person instruction, we are looking for additional ways to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in the classroom setting, should a case arise.

Although Public Health will evaluate the scenario for each new case individually, we will generally be recommending that all children enrolled in on-site education and placed into quarantine due to contact with a COVID positive, be tested for COVID-19. Exposed individuals are most likely to test positive by day 7-10 after exposure. Quarantine is 14 days regardless of a negative result. If a child becomes symptomatic, they should be tested at that time, regardless of where they are in the quarantine period.

If a child in quarantine tests positive, they will be placed in isolation status and their close contacts will be placed in quarantine.

Testing capacity is not unlimited but at this time we feel we can manage the volume in our public health lab. By testing all children, optimally in the 7-10 day time frame post-exposure, we should be able to reduce the chance that an asymptomatic child who is infected, returns to the classroom while still in the infectious period. It will also identify households that have been exposed, so effective measures may be taken.

Currently, we are asking providers to collect specimens and send them to the Humboldt County Public Health Laboratory. Please note on the requisition that this is Tier 1.

We expect the new regional testing entity to be operational by mid-October and then providers will have the option of directing patients there for collection and testing.

We appreciate your assistance with this process and the effort to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on students, teachers and classrooms. As we learn more about COVID-19 and the school setting and/or as conditions change locally, we may need to amend this process.

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