COVID-19 Pharmacy Testing Update - May 21, 2020
Pharmacists May Now Perform COVID-19 Tests

Pharmacists may now order and perform tests without entering into a collaborative practice agreement or protocol and without a prescription, standing order, or supervision from a physician. Pharmacy testing is subject to the conditions and limitations in paragraph 2 of the order issued by the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs order. Please click this link to read the order and for more information go to the NJ Division of Consumers Affairs COVID-19 page.

The profession of pharmacy is now on point to showcase the ability and training of our independent pharmacy community. We must take great care to ensure that only properly authorized testing is offered and the highest degree of professionalism is displayed at all times.

Key Provisions of the Administrative Order Include:

a. Testing shall be limited to tests authorized by the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization designated for use in a Point of Care Setting. Click this link for a list and descriptions of the diagnostic tests and medical devices that have been authorized for emergency use by the FDA;

b. Ability to order testing for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, or its antibodies;

c. Allowed to collect specimens to test for COVID-19 or its antibodies;

d. Performance of tests for COVID-19 or its antibodies at or immediately outside of a registered pharmacy;

e. Ability to interpret and analyze COVID-19 or COVID-19 antibody test results and provide the results to patients;

f. Required to collect, analyze and monitor patient data relating to COVID-19 or COVID-19 antibody testing;

g. If you plan to offer COVID-19 testing in your pharmacy, you will need to have a CLIA Certificate of Waiver, but it is NOT needed for specimen collection. For information on how to obtain CLIA waiver click this link. You should research the name and manufacturer and test in order to complete the form.

COVID-19 Testing Reimbursement Status:

There has been increasing movements to solidify a path for pharmacies to obtain reimbursement for COVID-19 testing. In particular, it is important that pharmacies read the NCPA summary on enrolling temporarily as an Independent Clinical Laboratory during the COVID-19 crisis, see links below.

- Find out how to get reimbursed by Medicare for certain COVID-19 tests performed by pharmacists. There has been some confusion regarding what Medicare will cover, how pharmacists should enroll in Medicare, etc. This NCPA summary should provide some much needed clarification.

- Link to codes and Medicare Reimbursement Rates for Covid-19 Tests

- HHS Announcement (April 8, 2020) Pharmacists given authorization to order and administer COVID-19 tests
This Week New Jersey’s Pharmacists were again Highlighted in both Governor Murphy’s Remarks and Attorney General Grewal’s Statement

It is clear that the key role that pharmacists play in providing healthcare at the community level is both recognized and appreciated by the Murphy Administration. Now, we must take the ball and run with it. As more tests are authorized, it will become easier. For now, pharmacies must get ready: become approved as a Medicare Independent Clinical Laboratory, obtain a CLIA waiver. All will be necessary to be reimbursed.

**Quote from Governor Murphy** "Across our state, there are more than 2,200 pharmacies, both independent, by the way, and chain. These pharmacies are run by professionals who have a deep well of trust and a strong connection with their broader communities," Murphy said. "These are the places where customers and residents may feel most comfortable to receive a COVID-19 test, in a place they trust, from a pharmacist they know."

**Quote from Attorney General Grewal** "With thousands of pharmacists now authorized to administer COVID-19 tests, finding a testing site in New Jersey will be as easy as walking to the corner drug store."

State Legislation to Make COVID-19 Testing for Pharmacists Permanent with Payment Model

*Passed the State Senate 40-0…*

S2436 Authorizes Pharmacists to Administer COVID-19 Tests (Support)

S2436/A4012: Authorizes pharmacists to order and administer test for Covid-19 consistent with federal guidance. We would like to thank Senator Vin Gopal and Assemblyman Raj Mukherji for including our recommended amendments which further remove barriers to COVID-19 testing in a pharmacy setting. The amendments remove barriers by allowing pharmacies to order and administer any test that is authorized by the FDA. The amendments also require that healthcare professionals, such as pharmacists, shall receive payment for performing Covid-19 tests from private and public healthcare plans. The bill will make the administrative order permanent when the current health crisis ends. The bill was unanimously approved by the full Senate on May 14 and is awaiting consideration in the Assembly Health Committee.