

Steps Healthcare Facilities Should Take Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Louisiana Healthcare Facility,

This is a joint message from the Louisiana Hospital Association (LHA) and the Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released guidance on steps your facility should be taking now to prepare for a case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Please share and distribute this message among administrators and preparedness staff at your facility. At this time, there are no cases or Persons Under Investigation (PUI) in Louisiana, but we should be actively preparing for them.

- Healthcare providers should obtain a detailed travel history for all hospitalized patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness. Patients with clinical features and epidemiologic risk factors for COVID-19 should be immediately reported to the Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology (IDEpi) Hotline at **1-800-256-2748**.
- IDEpi's Healthcare-Associated Infections/Antibiotic Resistance Team is available to address infection control questions and assist healthcare facilities with COVID-19 preparedness planning. Please email InfectionControl@la.gov for information.
- The State Public Health Laboratory has validated the testing for COVID-19, and now has the ability to test within Louisiana. This will shorten the time to diagnosis or rule out cases. Clinicians who suspect COVID-19 in a patient should call **1-800-256-2748** to determine whether a specimen should be collected and submitted for testing.

The true impact of a COVID-19 outbreak in a U.S. community cannot be predicted. However, all healthcare facilities can take steps now to prepare for such an outbreak and protect both their patients and staff.

The CDC has released new documents for hospital preparedness that should be reviewed and enacted now if you have not already done so:

Healthcare Facilities:

- [Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities: Preparing for Community Transmission of COVID-19 in the United States](#): Outlines goals and strategies for all U.S. healthcare facilities to prepare for and respond to community spread of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19)
- [Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities \(LTCF\)](#): General strategies the CDC recommends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in LTCF
- [Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#): Steps your facility should be taking today
- [Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment](#): Guidance on the use of PPE; optimization and extending shelf life of N-95 masks

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Be Prepared:

- **Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.** Know where to turn for reliable, up-to-date information in your local community. Monitor the CDC COVID-19 [website](#) and your state and local health department [website](#) for the latest information.
- **Develop, or review, your facility's emergency plan.** A COVID-19 outbreak in your community could lead to staff absenteeism. Prepare alternative staffing plans to ensure as many of your facility's staff members are available as possible.
- **Establish relationships with key healthcare and public health partners in your community.** Make sure you know about healthcare and public health emergency planning and response activities in your community. Learn about plans to manage patients, accept transfers and share supplies. Review any memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with affiliates, your healthcare coalition and other partners to provide support or assistance during emergencies.
- **Create an emergency contact list.** Develop and continuously update emergency contact lists for key partners and ensure the lists are accessible in key locations in your facility. For example, know how to reach your local or state health department in an emergency.

If you have a patient with clinical features and epidemiologic risk factors for COVID-19, immediately contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health IDEpi Hotline at **1-800-256-2748**.