

This is an official
DHEC Health Update

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10456-DHU-04-06-2020-COVID-19

Updated Guidance for COVID-19 case follow-up, guidelines for isolation and quarantine and cloth mask use

Summary

In order to improve efficiency as more testing is being requested and cases are being identified, DHEC is providing updated guidance on the process for case follow-up of COVID-19 patients in South Carolina. Information to assist in patient evaluation, assessing appropriateness for testing for COVID-19, and submitting specimens can be found in the DHEC HANs distributed on March 13, 2020 and March 29, 2020 and available [here](#).

Providers are encouraged to register if not already receiving alerts directly at <https://www.scdhec.gov/SCHANRegistration/>

Important Updates:

- Effective immediately, providers are to discontinue use of the Person-Under-Investigation (PUI) form previously required in the DHEC Health Update dated March 13, 2020.
- Be aware of the isolation and quarantine guidance provided in the March 21, 2020 HAN and the priority categories for DHEC investigations in the March 29, 2020 HAN available [here](#). With a rising number of COVID-19 cases, there may be a delay in DHEC contacting patients. Healthcare providers will need to be able to provide guidance on isolation, quarantine, and identifying close contacts.
- Updated guidance on the use of cloth masks is provided based on recommendations released by the CDC on April 3, 2020.

Discontinue use of the Person-Under-Investigation (PUI) form

Effective immediately, providers are to discontinue use of the Person-Under-Investigation (PUI) form previously required in the DHEC Health Update dated March 13, 2020.

Regional DHEC Epidemiology staff have been provided a COVID-19 Case Report Form (**CRF**) which will be used to collect information on a positive COVID-19 patient when notification is made to Public Health.

The CRF will be used to collect key information on positive COVID-19 individuals, based upon the investigation performed by DHEC staff, in collaboration with the provider.

Guidelines for isolation and quarantine

The information below should be communicated to patients who are well enough to return home to prevent spread of the COVID-19 virus. Continue to educate patients about social distancing practices and hand and cough hygiene. Patients can be directed to the DHEC website to answer many of their questions (<https://www.scdhec.gov/covid-19/>).

Patients being tested for COVID-19: Patients with respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 who are undergoing testing should be told to isolate at home until results are obtained. They need to avoid contact with anyone outside the home and those inside the home to the extent that is possible.

Patients who are confirmed positive for COVID-19: Patients who have tested positive also need to isolate at home until they meet all three criteria:

- Overall improvement in symptoms - AND-
- Three (3) days since their last fever -AND-
- Seven (7) days since their symptoms started

DHEC does not recommend testing for asymptomatic patients at this time. However, if a patient with no symptoms tests positive, they will need to isolate at home until seven (7) days after their specimen was collected.

Close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases: Confirmed cases should identify anyone they were in close contact with, defined as within six (6) feet for at least ten minutes, while they had symptoms and two (2) days before symptoms started. These individuals should consider self-quarantine at home for 14 days after their last contact with the person. They should avoid anyone outside the home and anyone inside the home as much as possible. Household contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case isolating in the same home will need to continue self-quarantine until seven (7) days after the case completes the isolation (criteria above).

Cloth mask use

Patients may ask about using homemade cloth masks while out in public. The following guidance can be provided, and they can be directed to the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>)

- Use of cloth mask while in public is voluntary but may help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- Patients should not buy manufactured masks for this purpose as it may create a shortage for healthcare providers. A homemade mask as demonstrated on the CDC website is sufficient.
- Mask use is not intended to replace social distancing and hand washing practices. The masks may prevent the spread of the virus in an asymptomatic patient who is wearing it. People must continue to use social distancing to protect themselves and others.
- The recommendation for masks is for situations in public where maintaining social distancing may be difficult (i.e. grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.).

- Masks should not be used by those who are symptomatic to go out in public, unless using it while seeking medical care. Symptomatic individuals must continue to isolate and avoid any public places.

COVID-19 is considered Immediately Reportable in South Carolina, under the “Novel Infectious Agent” condition in the 2020 South Carolina List of Reportable Conditions. Report positive test results from commercial reference laboratories by calling the regional epidemiology office of the county where the patient resides (see contact information below for the Regional Public Health Offices). Epidemiology staff will assist with next steps for case and contact investigation activities.

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a Novel Infectious Agent is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2020 List of Reportable Conditions available at:

<https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2020			
Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region			
MAIL OR FAX TO:			
<u>Lowcountry</u> Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg 4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051	<u>Midlands</u> Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York 2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 576-2993	<u>Pee Dee</u> Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg 1931 Industrial Park Road Conway, SC 29526 Fax: (843) 915-6502 Fax2: (843) 915-6506	<u>Upstate</u> Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union 200 University Ridge Greenville, SC 29602 Fax: (864) 282-4373
CALL TO:			
Lowcountry Office: (843) 441-1091 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091	Midlands Office: (888) 801-1046 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046	Pee Dee Office: (843) 915-8886 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845	Upstate Office: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648
For information on reportable conditions, see https://www.scdhec.gov/ReportableConditions		<u>DHEC Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention & Control</u> Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902	

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.