



Minnesota Hospital Association

2550 University Ave. W., Suite 350-S
St. Paul, MN 55114-1900

phone: (651) 641-1121; fax: (651) 659-1477
toll-free: (800) 462-5393; www.mnhospitals.org

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2020

Contact:

Wendy Burt

wburt@mnhospitals.org

Emily R. Lowther

elowther@mnhospitals.org

Minnesota hospitals, health systems move to prioritize COVID-19 testing because of shortage of testing supplies

ST. PAUL – In light of concerns about availability of COVID-19 test kits and capacity in Minnesota, hospitals and health systems have been taking action to conserve testing resources to those most in need. This is in line with the Minnesota Department of Health’s (MDH) [new guidelines](#) released Tuesday.

Health care providers will prioritize testing for patients who are in the hospital needing acute care, health care workers and first responders and certain residents of skilled nursing facilities.

After a health care provider obtains a sample for COVID-19 testing, the sample is submitted to MDH or a private lab for testing. Minnesota is experiencing a shortage of testing supplies, which means that samples collected from individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 are not able to complete the testing process.

“I am concerned that national messaging from the White House task force regarding test availability in all states and accessible drive-up testing does not accurately reflect these critical shortages in Minnesota,” said Dr. Rahul Koranne, president and CEO, MHA. “We currently do not have adequate testing supplies in Minnesota. Minnesota’s hospitals and health systems are working together to problem-solve and do all we can to mitigate this situation, but we need more support and supply resources from the federal government and private industry. We also need the cooperation of the public to help us conserve vital resources for those most in need.”

Hospitals and health systems want to emphasize for community members that **if you are concerned about your symptoms, call your health care provider**. Your provider will work with you to determine whether you should be tested for COVID-19 and may only recommend testing if you meet certain criteria. You may be asked to isolate at home and monitor your symptoms at the direction of your provider.

“If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, assume you are positive and stay home, and call your clinic,” Koranne said. “We all have a critical role to flatten the curve of the virus and to conserve hospital and health care system capacity for the acutely ill.”

Hospitals and health systems also want to be sure patients are receiving the right care in the right location. **Based on your symptoms, you may not need to come to a hospital or clinic.** It cannot be emphasized enough: hospital care needs to be preserved for those who are acutely ill. Patients should not visit the hospital emergency department unless they are experiencing an emergency situation. Your provider can help you determine if you should come in.

The Minnesota Hospital Association represents Minnesota's hospitals and health systems, which provide quality care for their patients and meet the needs of their communities.

#