MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

This is an official
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert

MESSAGE ID:	**MSHAN-2020320-00434-ALT (Health Alert)**
RECIPIENTS:	**All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and Healthcare Providers - Statewide**
DATE:	**Friday, March 20, 2020**
SUBJECT:	**COVID-19 Health Alert Update, March 20, 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

- The Mississippi State Department of Health is reporting 80 cases of COVID-19 in the state as of 6:00 p.m. March 19, 2020 (case counts will be updated on the MSDH website each morning www.healthyms.com/coronavirus).
- **MSDH is also reporting the first death in a Mississippi resident, a hospitalized Hancock County resident 60-65 years of age with chronic underlying health conditions placing them at higher risk.**
- While many identified cases have distinct out of state or cruise ship travel exposures, community-based transmission is occurring in an increasing number of areas, including a cluster of cases associated with a funeral in Leflore County the first week of March. Additional cases and broader transmission are expected.
- **For the 80 cases for which information is known:**
  - Onsets of illness range from February 28, 2020 to March 16, 2020
  - 35% of the cases have been hospitalized
  - Cases range in age from 11 years to 89 years
  - 59% of the cases are in persons ≥50 years of age
  - 46% of the cases are in persons ≥60 years of age
  - 65% of the cases are among females

NEW UPDATED INFORMATION

- **Potential Healthcare Worker Exposures to COVID-19**
  - MSDH has developed supplemental guidance for hospitals, clinics, physicians and providers, and other healthcare facilities about determining the risk of healthcare worker exposures to COVID-19 through provision of care and services.
  - This guidance is available on the MSDH website (https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/resources/8508.pdf) and should be utilized in conjunction with the CDC guidance for Healthcare Personnel with Potential

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COVID-19 Exposure at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html)

- o **Please note that both the CDC and MSDH guidance indicate that asymptomatic healthcare workers who have high or medium risk exposures may continue to work if other options to improve staffing have been exhausted and the exposed healthcare worker is masked at work and monitored for symptoms for 14 days post exposure.**
- o **Testing of asymptomatic individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 is not recommended; asymptotic healthcare workers will still need to take the above precautions for 14 days after last exposure.**

- **Discontinuation of Home Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Infection**
  - o CDC has provided guidance for determining when a case of COVID-19 may discontinue home isolation (or when they are no longer considered infectious), utilizing a non-test based and a test-based strategy (see https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html for details).
  - o MSDH is providing this guidance to cases, including cases identified among healthcare workers, and advising the cases to reach out to their primary care physician and, and if a healthcare worker, to their employer for additional guidance.
  - o For **Non-healthcare worker** cases, MSDH is recommending discontinuation of home monitoring if the following conditions are met:
    - At least 7 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
    - It has been at least 3 days since last fever (without antipyretics), **AND**
    - Symptoms (cough and shortness of breath, etc.) have continued to improve.
  - o For **Healthcare worker** cases a test-based strategy for return to work may be considered by the healthcare facility or employee. **In addition to the 7 days since onset and 3 days fever free with symptom improvement, facilities may also require (at the discretion of the facility)**
    - Negative results on two consecutive COVID-19 tests collected ≥24 hours apart

- **Alternatives to Viral Transport Media for COVID-19 Samples**
  - o The FDA has released new guidance indicating alternative transport media could be used to collect and transport patient samples for molecular RT-PCR SARS-CoV-2 assays in a manner that will stabilize the RNA without meaningful degradation. See the FDA website at https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2

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- **COVID-19 Laboratory Results from the Mississippi Public Health Laboratory (MPHL)**
  - The turnaround time for COVID-19 results from the MPHL is 48-72 hours after specimen receipt at the MPHL
  - Submitters may call 601-576-7582 Monday-Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm for COVID-19 results from the MPHL
  - Submitters—please complete the lab requisition form fully—missing information delays reporting and delays investigation by the Office of Epidemiology. Lab requisition form https://msdh.ms.gov/file/8500.pdf

IMPORTANT REMINDERS
- COVID-19 testing is not recommended for screening asymptomatic individuals, including asymptomatic contacts to release from quarantine.
- **Priority patients for COVID-19 testing are those with fever (≥100.4º F) and acute respiratory illness (e.g. cough, difficulty breathing) who meet the following criteria:**

Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
Symptomatic healthcare personnel, especially with a history of travel to an affected country (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html) or known contact to a suspected or confirmed cases in the 14 days prior to symptom onset.
Other symptomatic individuals (fever of ≥100.4º F and acute respiratory illness), especially in individuals at higher risk for poor outcomes (older adults and/or underlying chronic disease)

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State Epidemiologist

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Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency:	Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program:	MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)
Message Identifier:	MSHAN-2020320-00434-ALT
Program (HAN) Type:	Health Alert
Status (Type):	Actual ()
Message Type:	Alert
Reference:	MSHAN-00434
Severity:	Unknown
Acknowledgement:	No
Sensitive:	Not Sensitive
Message Expiration:	Undetermined
Urgency:	Undetermined
Delivery Time:	600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency:	A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.
Alerting Program:	The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.
Message Identifier:	A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**).
Program (HAN) Type:	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.
Health Info Service:	Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

	Actual:	Communication or alert refers to a live event
	Exercise:	Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
	Test:	Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded

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Message Type:

Alert:	Indicates an original Alert
Update:	Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
Cancel:	Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
Error:	Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of "Update" or "Cancel", this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. "n/a" = Not Applicable.

Severity:

Extreme:	Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe:	Significant threat to life or property
Moderate:	Possible threat to life or property
Minor:	Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown:	Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

Sensitive:	Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive:	Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).

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