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Lee A. Norman, M.D., Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

For Immediate Release
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KDHE updates the public on testing prioritization; issues new quarantine notices

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is issuing several updates today, including the addition of new states to the quarantine mandates as well as a prioritization for COVID-19 tests submitted to the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories.

Two states added to 14-day home quarantine

KDHE is now **mandating** 14-day home quarantine for Kansans who have:

- Traveled to a state with known widespread community transmission (California, Florida, New York and Washington state) on or after March 15.
- **Traveled to Illinois or New Jersey on or after March 23.**
- Visited Eagle, Summit, Pitkin and Gunnison counties in Colorado in the week of March 8 or after.
- Traveled on a cruise ship or river cruise on or after March 15.
    - People who have previously been told by Public Health to quarantine because of their cruise ship travel should finish out their quarantine.
- Traveled internationally on or after March 15.
    - People who have previously been told by Public Health to quarantine because of their international travel to China, South Korea, Japan, Italy and Iran should finish out their quarantine.
- Received notification from public health officials (state or local) that you are a close contact of a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19. You should quarantine at home for 14 days since your last contact with the case. (A close contact is defined as someone who has been closer than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes while the patient is symptomatic.)

Important Note: These mandates do not apply to critical infrastructure sectors needed to continue operations during this pandemic. Public health, including hospitals, clinics, etc. need to have the staffing resources to continue serving Kansans. While KDHE strongly recommends these quarantine restrictions for everyone, we do recognize that medical care needs to continue and no healthcare facility should ever be to a point where it would need to close due to staff being quarantined. We ask facilities to ensure they have updated their

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Emergency Preparedness Plans and implement protocols to ensure that no employee comes to work symptomatic. Other examples of critical infrastructures include pharmaceutical and food supply, along with others defined by the Department of Homeland Security.

Testing Prioritization Change

Due to widescale shortages of laboratory supplies and reagents, testing for COVID-19 at the state lab is being prioritized for public health purposes and urgent need. KDHE will be prioritizing specimens for COVID-19 testing based upon those who meet Kansas' patient under investigation (PUI) criteria starting today, March 23.

Those include:

- Healthcare workers and first responders who have COVID-19 symptoms
- Potential clusters of unknown respiratory illness, with priority given to long-term care facilities and healthcare facilities
- Hospitalized patients with no alternative diagnosis
- Individuals over the age of 60 who have symptoms of COVID-19 with priority given to people who reside in a nursing home, long-term care facility, or other congregate setting, and
- Individuals with underlying health conditions that would be treated differently if they were infected with COVID-19.

Specimens that were sent to KDHE prior to March 23, will still be tested. However, moving forward healthcare providers should:

- Send specimens to a commercial reference laboratory.
- Inform all patients who present with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (e.g., measured fever of 100.4 (F) or greater and lower respiratory symptoms including cough or shortness of breath) who are not a high priority for testing to:
    - Self-isolate at home or another appropriate location for 7 days after illness onset or for 72 hours after resolution of fever (without fever-reducing medication) and significant improvement in symptoms, whichever is longer.

"KDHE has been in contact with the CDC, FEMA, manufacturers and distributors of the testing supplies and reagents to find ones our laboratory needs to run the specimens collected for COVID-19 testing," Dr. Lee Norman, KDHE Secretary, said. "We are doing everything in our power to get supplies for our state. We are focusing testing in our lab on higher risk individuals at this time."

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For more information, please visit the KDHE website at www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus. KDHE has a phone bank that is staffed Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. The phone number is **1-866-534-3463** (1-866-KDHEINF). KDHE also has an email address for general inquiries, COVID-19@ks.gov. Please note these contacts are for general questions and cannot provide you with medical evaluations. If you are feeling ill, please stay home and call your healthcare provider.

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