Department of Health Announces New Regulations Requiring Increased and Postmortem COVID-19 and Influenza Testing to Ensure Data Integrity

ALBANY, N.Y. (August 31, 2020) - The New York State Department of Health today announced that confirmatory COVID-19 and Influenza testing will be required whenever a hospital patient or nursing home resident has a known exposure or symptoms consistent with either disease. Testing must also be performed on any hospital patient or nursing home resident where the person is suspected of having died of such disease, within 48 hours after death, if that individual had not previously received a COVID-19 and influenza test in the 14 days prior to death. This emergency regulation also applies to funeral directors and medical examiners for individuals suspected of having died from either disease, but were not in the care of a hospital or nursing home. This process will ensure integrity in data reporting as the State continues its COVID-19 pandemic response and as we prepare for another flu season.

The emergency regulations can be found here.

Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "While the human toll this virus has taken on New Yorker is immeasurable, these regulations will ensure we have the most accurate death data possible as we continue to manage COVID-19 while preparing for flu season. Good quality health data helps inform good quality public health decisions, and this information will strengthen our contact tracing efforts and slow the spread of this virus."

Any facility or local health department that lacks the ability to perform testing within the required timeframe can request that the New York State Health Department perform the test.

For more information on New York State's COVID-19 response click here.

For information on how to prepare for the upcoming flu season click here.