CANTERBURY PRIMARY RESPONSE GROUP **COVID-19** UPDATE

Monday 17th August 2020 1400 hours

Important information for all General Practices, Community Pharmacies, Community Nursing and Aged Care Facilities – Please share this with everyone in your team

Testing

The volume of testing across New Zealand last week has been impressive! Thank you to General Practice for your hard work assessing and testing patients. Testing volumes have dropped a little over the weekend, but we expect large numbers again during this week.

- Nationwide we have sufficient testing kits and reagents to meet this demand. The pressure points on testing are capacity of testing sites and laboratories to process the volumes.
- Currently we are being asked to test symptomatic patients only. The only situations in which people without symptoms should be tested are:
    - Border workers – please identify on the lab form that the patient is a border worker and specify their occupation.
    - Close contacts of known cases of COVID-19
    - Other asymptomatic people only if directed by MoH or Community & Public Health
    - Those who need a swab before travel as a requirement of the destination they are traveling to (this is a private test and needs to be paid for at the time of collection).
- Currently there is no capacity or rationale to test asymptomatic people whose employer has requested testing (this includes asymptomatic health care workers without known exposure). We are working with the Chamber of Commerce on communicating with employers regarding appropriate testing.
- Canterbury Health Lab are currently working extended hours for COVID testing (overnight as required), and are assisting to manage the Auckland volumes. The majority of swabs are processed within 24 hours.
    - Any positive results are communicated directly to C&PH to facilitate prompt follow-up.
    - All results are communicated back to GPs, CBACs, and go onto HealthOne (where an NHI is identified) within the following 24 hours. Results of swabs taken at CBACs are routinely copied to GPs providing the patient has consented to this.
    - Negative CBAC test results are sent by text to patients at 8am daily.
- Phone calls to the lab take staff away from other work and have an impact on the speed with which they are able to communicate batches of results electronically. Please refrain from calling the lab directly for COVID-19 results.

Payment for Consultations

- Just a reminder of the criteria for the various levels of assessment for funding. Please be aware that Level C assessment should *only* be claimed for a full in-person assessment with two staff and room cleaning, and only for patients meeting HIS criteria. For in-person assessment of patients not meeting HIS criteria, please claim Level B funding. Further details can be found on HealthPathways here.

Communications with Pharmacy

- As an essential service pharmacies will remain open for all alert levels – there is no need for patients to stockpile medications.
- Please indicate on the referral if a prescription is URGENT.
- Pharmacies need time to process scripts delivered by ERMS, ePrescribing and fax. It would be helpful for both pharmacies and patients if practices remind patients that their non-urgent prescriptions will be ready 24 hours after it is sent to the pharmacy.

Kind regards,

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