

Friday 28th August 2020 1600 hours

Important information for all General Practices – Please share this with everyone in your team as appropriate

Asymptomatic Testing Update

- The Ministry of Health has suggested an outline for consideration of asymptomatic testing in addition to baseline community symptomatic surveillance. They have suggested that this will be in place for the next two to three weeks.
- The CDHB Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has reviewed this document and considered how best to apply each of the suggested strands.
- We feel this fluctuating messaging around access to testing is creating confusion in the community. That said, we are aware that this document has been shared widely by the Ministry and we are cautious that we do not want to create conflict for primary care if patients are requesting swabs.
- COVID-19 tests should continue to be offered for people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- We will not be actively promoting asymptomatic swabbing or offering 'pop-up' facilities.

However...

- If you have a patient who fits into one of the categories outlined below who is requesting an asymptomatic swab, the test can proceed and claimed in the usual way. If you do not have capacity, the patient can be advised to attend one of the testing centres.
- If you do an asymptomatic swab, **please mark clearly** on the lab form their eligibility from the outlined groups and that it is an asymptomatic surveillance swab. Clearly indicate clinical details, including high risk occupation, border worker status, HIS criteria, etc.
- The plan for asymptomatic testing over the next 2-3 weeks is outlined below:
 - *Healthcare workers and aged care workers* (includes primary care)
 - Perform a sample of tests in a 'swab the swabbers' strategy.
 - Primary care teams and ARC staff can access asymptomatic testing if they are regularly engaged in swabbing for COVID-19. This includes people who have worked in testing centres.
 - This testing will be performed at the **CDHB Staff Testing Centre**, which will allow management of volumes and collection of accurate data. Details of how to access this are outlined below.
 - The asymptomatic testing will be available for the next two weeks on an appointment basis.
 - Email staff.testing@cdhb.health.nz with your name, DOB, NHI (if known), and preferred contact number.
 - Testing Centre staff will phone the staff member to arrange an appointment time for testing. The Occupational Health Service will contact the staff member with test results and advice, or the results will be provided as per the agreed test protocol.
 - The Staff Testing Centre is open 7 days a week, between 8am and 4:30pm.
 - Healthcare workers should continue to be tested if they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The Staff Testing Centre is available for symptomatic testing of healthcare workers, including primary care, on an ongoing basis.
 - *Close contacts of border worker groups* can be tested if presenting to primary care or a CBAC and are requesting a test.
 - *Māori and Pasifika Peoples* can be tested if presenting to primary care or CBAC and are requesting a test.



- To avoid perpetuating health inequities with inconsistent messaging, we are working with Māori and Pasifika providers to maintain access to testing for these communities in the medium-long term.
- *Seniors and people with pre-existing conditions* can be tested if presenting to primary care or CBAC and are requesting a test.
- *Border workers*
 - Occupational surveillance testing is underway for people who work at the border.
 - These people should be encouraged to attend a CBAC or workplace facility if asymptomatic, for the purposes of data gathering.
- *Air crew* can be tested and the voucher should be sent with the sample.
- *Close contacts* should be tested as instructed by Community & Public Health or National Contact Tracing and notified to the Medical Officer of Health.

Kind regards,

Deborah Callahan
Primary EOC Manager

Drs Hannah Gordon & Kim Burgess
Clinical Leads

P.S. **Testing centres** are open at the following locations – no referrals required:

- Whānau Ora CBAC – 250 Pages Road, 9am-4pm, 7 days a week until further notice
- 174 Orchard Road CBAC – 9am-4pm, 7 days a week until further notice
- Ashburton Hospital CBAC – 28 Elizabeth Street, 10am-2pm, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

