



NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois First State to Test for Novel Coronavirus

Statewide hotline available for questions

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is now able to conduct testing for the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), making Illinois the first state to be able to do testing in state. Once specimens from individuals are received at the Chicago IDPH laboratory, test results are typically available within 24 hours. IDPH is in the process of bringing testing for 2019-nCoV online in its Springfield and Carbondale laboratories.

“The ability to do this testing will mean we will be able to detect any new cases of novel coronavirus earlier and prevent any possible spread,” said IDPH Assistant Director Evonda Thomas-Smith. “We understand there is concern about this new virus, which is why having test results back quickly can help reduce some of those concerns.”

Last Wednesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began shipping 2019-nCoV laboratory test kits to select qualified U.S. and international laboratories. The distribution and use of the test kits follows the U.S. [Food and Drug Administration, February 4, 2020, issuance of an Emergency Use Authorization](#). The test is intended for use with upper and lower respiratory specimens collected from people who meet [CDC criteria for 2019-nCoV testing](#). Those criteria include looking at travel and/or exposure history, as well as symptoms and/or fever.

“It’s an exciting development to be able to add this tool to our arsenal as we work to limit the spread of this virus,” said Allison Arwady, MD, MPH, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. “A quicker response will help alleviate concerns of those being tested as well as the general public. We continue to work very closely with federal, state, and local partners to ensure that we have a robust and coordinated public health response to emerging infectious diseases.”

Also, on Friday, IDPH along with the Illinois Poison Center stood up a hotline for residents across the state to call if they have questions about this new coronavirus. Residents in Illinois outside Chicago can call the hotline at 800-889-3931 or email DPH.SICK@illinois.gov. The number for Chicago residents is 312-746-4835 Monday through Friday during business hours and 311 during evenings, weekends, and holidays, or email coronavirus@chicago.gov.

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Currently in Illinois, two residents have tested positive for 2019-nCoV, while 44 test results have come back negative. More information about novel coronavirus can be found on the [IDPH website](#), including [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

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