



July 29, 2020

Dear Health Care Professional,

The Commonwealth is still being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is continuing to work tirelessly to stop the spread of this virus among communities across the state. Successful mitigation efforts have led to a decrease in the number of new cases and allowed for the measured reopening of Pennsylvania in May and June. However, person-to-person spread is continuing, as the Commonwealth has seen increases in new cases of COVID-19 that are due to community spread.

Viral testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is extremely important to the Commonwealth's response. Viral testing identifies individuals that have a current COVID-19 infection so that person can receive appropriate treatment and isolate, and close contacts of that person can quarantine so they do not expose additional individuals. As COVID-19 cases have increased in many areas of the state, the demand for viral testing has also increased.

Because of the need for viral testing for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms, I have signed an order stating that hospitals must implement specimen collection procedures for viral testing of SARS-CoV-2 for any COVID-19 symptomatic person coming to the hospital's emergency department for treatment. I want to assure you that this order does not mean that emergency departments should be the new universal COVID-19 testing hub for Pennsylvanians. Our PA DOH website has a public facing tool to help Pennsylvanians find one of the over 400 public testing sites in Pennsylvania. We still strongly encourage individuals who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 to contact their health care provider or visit a local public testing site.

We sincerely appreciate all the work that health care professionals and emergency departments have done and will continue to do to test those with COVID-19 symptoms and treat those with the virus. Together, we can continue to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among our communities.

Stay calm. Stay alert. Stay safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Levine, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Levine, MD
Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania