April 29, 2020

Dear Health Care Providers, Lab Directors, and Administrators:

Re: COVID-19 Testing, Tracing, Isolating

In "pandemic time," I write to ask for your urgent help to control COVID-19.

To prepare to reverse engineer COVID-19 community mitigation measures, the public health system is working quickly to rebuild, surge, and strengthen case and contact investigations so we can rapidly isolate cases and quarantine contacts. We believe full discovery of COVID-19 cases and timely contact tracing is essential to suppress transmission in the community and avoid a rebound in COVID-19 activity.

As we strengthen our system**, we ask your help to**:

Test ALL patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, including young and healthy patients

1. See new testing guidance from the Department of Health for more information. If you do not have PPE, contact your local emergency management agency to request and receive these items. If you represent a Tribal Nation or a Local Health Jurisdiction, testing specimen collection supplies can be ordered using the Specimen Collection Request Portal.

2. **Ensure that 100 percent of your COVID-19 lab samples are submitted with the patient's address as well as contact information (phone and email). More than 55 percent of lab results are submitted to us with incomplete or missing contact information, which greatly delays our public health work and limits our ability to suppress transmission of COVID-19.** Per WAC 246-101-105, when ordering a lab test for a notifiable condition, health care providers must provide the lab with the patient name, patient address including zip code, and patient date of birth. WAC 246-101-225 authorizes public health officials to require other information of public health value, such as a patient phone number and email address. Your compliance will help all of us keep people safe and save lives. Small things in this response can make a huge difference.

3. Provide all patients you test for COVID-19 with the following information sheets and counsel them to a) isolate themselves while waiting for their test results and b) quarantine their other household members:

    *   What to do if you have confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
    *   What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID)

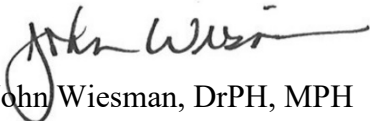- [What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19](#)

As we retool our system, we will soon ask health care providers to have all patients tested for COVID-19 to complete an electronic patient demographic and contact information form so we can get a head start if the patient tests positive.

Our success as a state relies upon our tightly coordinated efforts, and we appreciate your help.

Respectfully,

John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH
Secretary of Health