

NCDHHS Updates Guidance on Who Should be Tested for COVID-19

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services issued [updated guidance](#) today on who should be tested for COVID-19. The new guidance recommends that clinicians test any patient in whom COVID-19 is suspected.

The [new guidance recommends](#) clinicians ensure the following populations have access to [testing](#), regardless of symptoms:

- Anyone with symptoms suggestive of [COVID-19](#)
- Close contacts of known positive cases, regardless of symptoms
- Persons who live in or have regular contact with high-risk settings (e.g., long-term care facility, homeless shelter, correctional facility, migrant farmworker camp)
- Persons who are at high risk of severe illness (e.g., people over 65 years of age, people of any age with underlying health conditions)
- Persons who come from historically marginalized populations
- Health care workers or first responders (e.g. EMS, law enforcement, fire department, military)
- Front-line and essential workers (grocery store clerks, gas station attendants, etc.) in settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain

"We want anyone who needs a test to get one. This is particularly important for those at high-risk for severe illness, those at greatest risk for exposure and those who are being disproportionately impacted by this virus," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D.

Testing, along with contact tracing and supplies of personal protective equipment, is part of the state's strategy to slowly ease restrictions, while protecting North Carolinians from COVID-19. The state is looking at a composite of metrics to guide its path forward, including the number of cases, the percent of tests that are positive, the number of hospitalizations and the number of emergency department visits for COVID-like illness. Yesterday, Governor Roy Cooper and NCDHHS Secretary Cohen shared these metrics remain stable for the first week of Phase 1.

The new guidance updates testing criteria for the [North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health](#). Those include hospitalized patients, health care workers or first responders, persons who live in or have regular contact with a high-risk setting, persons who are at higher risk of severe illness and for whom a clinician has determined that results would inform clinical management, and uninsured patients.

Staying home is still the best way to continue to slow the spread of [COVID-19](#) and protect North Carolinians. When going out, remember the 3 Ws. Wear a face covering. Wait at least six feet apart. Wash your hands often with soap and water.

For information on the North Carolina COVID-19 response across state government, visit nc.gov/covid19.