January 22, 2020

Kentucky Department for Public Health

HEALTH ADVISORY

Background for Healthcare Providers:

As you may be aware, a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) has been identified in Wuhan, China, with over 300 human cases reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the time of this alert. Many case patients have links to a seafood-poultry market that has now been shut down. Cases have now been identified in other countries (Thailand – 2, Japan – 1, South Korea – 1, U.S. – 1); Several of these patients reported travel to Wuhan but no exposure to the implicated market, suggesting the possibility of person-to-person transmission. Several patients have died. The first case in the U.S. was reported by CDC on 1/21/20, in a person who had traveled to Wuhan.

Kentucky may receive travelers who have had recent travel to Wuhan, China. Wuhan is a city of 11M and the U.S. receives about 75,000 travelers from this city annually (avg. 1,442/week). Traveler monitoring began in China last week with temperature monitoring. CDC implemented monitoring in three major U.S. airports (LAX in Los Angeles, JFK in New York, and SFO in San Francisco) over the past weekend and is planning to expand to Atlanta and Chicago soon. All travelers are being screened for travel from or through Wuhan in the last 14 days. If the traveler reports travel to Wuhan, they are further screened for in-depth travel history, any signs/symptoms of illness, patient contact information, and their temperature is checked. Symptomatic travelers will be immediately isolated and moved to a hospital. State and municipal health departments in the U.S. will be engaged for additional follow-up of others who might have been exposed to potential case patients.

If travelers are not symptomatic at the airport screening but report travel to Wuhan in the past 14 days, the traveler will be given a card written in both Chinese and English to carry with them to provide to healthcare providers if they develop symptoms and seek healthcare. The card instructs the ill traveler to call the healthcare facility in advance of coming to the facility. Two versions of the traveler health card are attached to this advisory for your reference. At this time, CDC will not be notifying states of travelers who have a Wuhan travel history. Thus, the traveler health cards are the primary means to alert physicians about the possibility of 2019-nCoV infection in people with a travel history to Wuhan.
Clinical Guidance:

All patients should be assessed for international travel. Patients with fever, acute respiratory illness and travel to Wuhan, China in the past 14 days, or who have had close contact with someone who is under investigation for, or lab-confirmed, with 2019-nCoV, are considered a “Patient Under Investigation” (PUI) (See attached CDC PUI Guidelines).

NOTE: Due to regular circulation of various coronavirus strains in Kentucky, travel to Wuhan, exposure to other PUI, or to another confirmed case is required to be designated a PUI for 2019-nCoV. Please do not report cases of coronavirus that do not have the required exposure history.

For all 2019-nCoV PUI you should follow the below guidelines immediately:

1) Ask the patient to wear a surgical mask as soon as they are identified;
2) Evaluate the patient in a private room with the door closed, ideally an airborne infection isolation room;
3) Healthcare personnel entering the room should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and eye protection (e.g., goggles or a face shield);
4) Obtain a detailed travel history;
5) Notify your healthcare facility’s infection control personnel;
6) Notify the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH);
   - During regular business hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm, M-F): Primary contacts are: Stacy Davidson and Dimple Patel at 502-564-3261
   - After hours or on weekends: Call 888-9-REPORT (888-973-7678)
7) Assist with/facilitate completion of Kentucky’s 2019-nCoV case investigation form (attached) as needed.

Testing, and Specimen Collection:

1) Conduct routine testing for respiratory pathogens;
2) Coordinate with KDPH to collect and ship specimens to CDC for 2019-nCoV testing;
   a. All specimen submission must be approved by KDPH before shipping. Please call the KDPH Reportable Disease Section at 502-564-3261 and ask for the Novel Coronavirus contact for the day. After hours or on weekends, call 888-9-REPORT (888-973-7678);
   b. CDC recommends collecting and testing multiple clinical specimens from different sites, including all three specimen types—lower respiratory, upper respiratory, and serum specimens;
   c. For biosafety reasons, DO NOT perform virus isolation in cell culture or initial characterization of viral agents recovered in cultures of specimens from a PUI for 2019-nCoV;
   d. For additional guidance or coordination of specimen submission, contact Rachel Zinner or Teresa Fields at the KDPH Division of Laboratory Services at 502-564-4446;
3) Additional specimen types (e.g., stool, urine, whole blood) may be collected and stored to increase the likelihood of detecting 2019-nCoV infection;

4) Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a PUI is identified regardless of time of symptom onset;

5) Additional guidance for collection, handling, and testing of clinical specimens is attached and is available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html

Persons under investigation who test positive for another respiratory pathogen should be clinically evaluated in consultation with public health authorities. As a result of this process, they may no longer be considered a PUI; however, this may evolve as more information becomes available on possible 2019-nCoV co-infections.

**Conclusion:**

Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We appreciate your work on the front lines of healthcare and your diligence in identifying and reporting cases of illness with public health significance. Without your efforts, we would be several steps behind in every public health event!

Sincerely,

Doug Thoroughman, PhD, MS
State Epidemiologist (Acting)
CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer
Kentucky Department for Public Health
Phone: 502-564-3418 x4315
Email: douglas.thoroughman@ky.gov

**Attachments:**
- Traveler Health Card Examples (2)
- CDC PUI Guidelines
- 2019-nCoV Case Investigation Form
- Collection, Handling, and Testing of Clinical Specimens: CDC Guidance