



1001 E. Fayette Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Bernard C. “Jack” Young, Mayor
Letitia Dzirasa, M.D., Commissioner of Health

May 11, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) recognizes the critical role Baltimore City clinicians play in the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) response. We understand that COVID-19 testing remains a complicated and sometimes confusing process for patients and clinicians. This letter aims to provide greater clarity around the current pathways to provide COVID-19 testing to your patients, including:

1. [How to get your patient tested for COVID-19](#), including information on CRISP referrals, 211 telehealth services, call centers and testing tents, and the CareLink web portal;
2. [Isolation and Quarantine Instructions](#) for patients. Providing these instructions is a vital part of testing and disease control and prevention.
3. [How to stay current with Baltimore City Health Department updates](#)

The information in this letter is current as of May 9, 2020. We will provide updates on [Baltimore City Health Department’s Clinician website](#).

HOW TO GET YOUR PATIENT TESTED FOR COVID-19

Testing for COVID-19 remains limited in Baltimore City, particularly for outpatients. However, there are increasing options for patients to get tested:

1. Provider referral for Baltimore City Health Department Community Testing Tent appointments (“CRISP” referrals). More detailed information on how to make a CRISP referral is in [Appendix 1](#).

- Providers credentialed in [CRISP](#) (Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients) can make referrals to certain testing tents. This includes the [Maryland Vehicle Emission Inspection Program \(VEIP\)](#) testing sites and [Baltimore City Health Department testing tents](#).
- Providers place a referral in CRISP for patients meeting testing criteria. Patients receive a confirmation number, and either the provider or patient can schedule an appointment in a CRISP-based appointment portal.
- Patients require a CRISP confirmation number and an appointment to receive a test. Appointments are limited, pending test availability.
- Providers should not send patients to these tents with just a prescription. Individual physician prescriptions cannot be processed at the site.
- The provider making the referral is responsible for notifying the patient of test results. Results are faxed to providers and are also available in CRISP.



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- More information on testing locations is on the [Baltimore City Coronavirus website](#) for patients. More information on the ordering process through CRISP can be found [here](#).

2. Call Centers

- Any resident of the central Maryland region can call [2-1-1](#) for any clinical COVID-19 related questions. Patients will be triaged based on symptoms and risk factors.
- **Telehealth services are available for patients with moderate symptoms without insurance or without a primary care physician.** Patients meeting CDC’s testing criteria may be offered a COVID-19 test, pending test availability. Patients will be referred to and scheduled at a variety of private and Baltimore City Health Department Community Testing Tents, pending test availability.
- Many clinical centers have additional COVID call centers available to the public (see **Appendix 2** and [MDH list of testing sites](#)).

3. Health Systems

- Several health systems offer non-office based testing on a limited basis. Patients are advised to call ahead to determine availability. See **Appendix 2** for a list of health systems offering testing.

4. Local Providers

- Local providers can provide testing to their patients if they have access to adequate PPE and NP, OP, or nasal swabs through a commercial laboratory. Swab collection must occur in the provider’s office – LabCorp and Quest are not collecting NP/OP samples at their phlebotomy sites
- Physicians who would like to order a COVID test through the Johns Hopkins COVID testing tents may place an order through Johns Hopkins CareLink, a web based portal that allows physicians outside of the Hopkins network to order labs through Hopkins laboratories. After an order is placed, the patient will be called to schedule an appointment for a test. Information on Johns Hopkins CareLink can be found at <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/CareLink/> Physicians who would like to sign up for CareLink can find information here: https://carelink.hopkinsmedicine.org/CareLink/common/epic_login.asp

ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS

- **It is imperative that all providers referring patients to testing at any location or conducting testing at their facility strongly counsel patients to isolate before and immediately after their testing is complete.** Providers should also counsel patient’s household contacts to remain quarantined until testing results are completed (and longer if test results are positive.) See BCHD Isolation and Quarantine instructions for [providers](#) and [patients](#). More extensive guidance from CDC is [here](#).
- Testing is only effective at preventing disease transmission if accompanied by isolation of ill individuals and quarantine of those who are exposed.

- Patients who require additional resources to effectively isolate, such as food assistance or social services, should call 2-1-1. For behavioral health support, please call the Crisis Information and Referral line at (410) 433-5175.
- **Please inform your patients that the health department will be calling them to conduct contact tracing.** Baltimore City Health Department calls all positive cases within Baltimore City, and conducts contact tracing. It is very helpful for providers to inform patients to expect the call from the Health Department.

UPDATED PROVIDER INFORMATION

The Baltimore City Health Department's (BCHD) response is evolving rapidly. Visit BCHD's [clinician web page](#) and the [CDC provider web page](#) for updated information on testing and clinical guidance. Consider **signing up** for the Baltimore City Health Department Provider Outreach Updates, which provide local context and resources as they relate to national and state guidance.

Pertinent highlights from this week's Baltimore City Health Department Provider Updates include:

1. The CDC updated its [priority guidance for COVID-19 testing](#), list of potential [COVID-19 symptoms](#), and its healthcare worker [return to work](#) guidance.
2. Wednesday 4/29, Governor Hogan issued an [executive order](#) supporting universal testing of all residents and staff at all Maryland nursing homes. On 4/24 he released the State of Maryland's "[Roadmap to Recovery](#)" plan. Secretary Neall updated testing priorities and other healthcare related issues in an order on [May 6, 2020](#).
3. Governor Hogan [announced](#) two new Vehicle Emission Inspection Program (VEIP) Sites in Owings Mills and Prince Frederick.
4. For volunteer staffing opportunities through the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MRMRC), please visit this [link](#).
5. Employment opportunities for healthcare professionals and support staff can be found at this [link](#).

Baltimore City Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. We will continue to share updates with you as important new information becomes available.

Thank you for caring for our Baltimore City residents, and partnering with us.

Sincerely,



Letitia Dzirasa, MD
Health Commissioner
Baltimore City Health Department

(See Appendix 1 and 2 below)

Appendix 1. How to get a patient tested at a CRISP testing site

- Providers credentialed in CRISP can place a referral for a COVID-19 testing appointment at a community testing tent or VEIP site.
 - Providers can call 1-877-952-7477 to be credentialed in CRISP.
- CRISP allows providers and patients to schedule appointments at the following locations:
 - Maryland Vehicle Emission Inspection Program (VEIP) sites -- a continuously updated list of these sites is available [here](#).
 - Baltimore City Health Department [community testing sites](#) in Baltimore City. The Baltimore City community testing sites allow for drive through OR walk through options. Appointments are needed for both drive through and walk through.
- Providers may use their clinical judgement to order tests for patients, but the [State of Maryland recommends](#) that providers **prioritize ordering COVID-19 tests for the following groups:**
 - **Symptomatic hospitalized patients;**
 - **Symptomatic patients and staff in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or other congregate living facilities housing individuals who are medically fragile, or as directed by the Maryland Department of Health;**
 - **Symptomatic emergency medical service personnel, healthcare workers, correctional officers, law enforcement personnel, and other first responders;**
 - **Symptomatic high-risk unstable patients who care would be altered by a diagnosis of COVID-19;**
 - **Persons identified through public health cluster and selected contact investigations; or**
 - **Persons without symptoms who are prioritized by MDH or a local health department, or at the direction of an MDH-designated response team**
- BCHD prefers that patients requesting testing for discontinuation of isolation or ‘return to work’ are not prioritized for community testing sites.
- Counsel patients to isolate before and immediately after their test, and for their close contacts to remain in quarantine until the test results are completed.
- Instructions from CRISP on ordering tests are [here](#). Or, follow these instructions:
 1. Open up the CRISP [unified landing page](#) and log in.
 2. Find your patient using their name and date of birth. Instructions are also provided if patients are not in CRISP.
 3. Select the “Include” column and click “COVID-19 Lab Order” on the ribbon at the top of the screen. If you cannot find your patient, click “No Patient: COVID-19 Lab Order”
 4. Fill out the Lab Order (which serves as the referral), **including the patient’s email address if possible**, and submit it.
 5. The patient will receive an email with the **confirmation code** and instructions necessary to schedule a test. Your patients may schedule the test themselves by calling 866-984-4405.
 6. If your patient needs assistance in scheduling their test, you may schedule on their behalf using the CRISP scheduling tool or by calling 866-984-4405. The CRISP scheduling tool link is available after submitting your patient’s Lab Order.

- After ordering a test for your patient, you should plan for the following:
 - A paper copy of the results will be faxed back to the provider, using the fax number entered into CRISP.
 - A copy of the results will also be available in CRISP. More information can be found [here](#). Providers who are having trouble locating results can call CRISP at 1-877-952-7477 or email support@crisphealth.org
 - **The provider who placed the referral in CRISP is responsible for contacting the patient with their test results.**
 - If the result is positive, counsel patients on the need to isolate, and for their close contacts to quarantine and monitor for symptoms.
 - Follow up with patients after their test to monitor their symptoms. Some patients have experienced worsening of symptoms around 5-9 days after symptom onset. Patients should be instructed to call their provider or seek medical attention if their symptoms worsen or need emergency assistance.

Can I provide my patients with a COVID-19 prescription without using CRISP?

Providers should *not* write prescriptions outside of CRISP for patients attending a Baltimore City community testing tent. Testing sites run by Baltimore City and the Maryland Department of Health require appointment times scheduled through CRISP. The appointment system helps to prevent transmission at testing sites and encourages social distancing. Providers can *refer* patients to the Baltimore City testing tents by placing a referral in CRISP. The referral will generate an appointment request, and patients can schedule an appointment at the tent.

(See Appendix 2 below)

Appendix 2. List of Health Systems offering non-office based testing.

Patients should call through the listed call centers. In general, patients need appointments or prescreening as noted and should not arrive at testing locations without an appointment or screening. Patients should not arrive at testing locations with prescriptions for tests that are obtained outside the call centers or televisits assigned to each tent.

Johns Hopkins Medicine

Several testing sites available

Patients without a primary care provider should call **443-997-9537** to speak with a provider and be screened for testing. Patients without primary care providers who are eligible for testing will be scheduled at one of several testing locations.

Kaiser Permanent Baltimore Harbor Medical Center

Patients should call **410-637-5700** to speak with a provider and be screened for testing. Patients who are eligible for testing will be scheduled at Kaiser's testing location.

LifeBridge Health, Sinai Hospital

2401 W. Belvedere Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215

Patients should call **211** to speak with a provider and be screened for testing or contact LifeBridge Health directly at **410.601.2222**. Patients who are eligible for testing will be scheduled at a Lifebridge testing location.

MedStar Federal Hill Urgent Care Testing Tent

1425 Key Hwy. Baltimore, MD 21230 (parking lot of museum across from the MedStar building)

Patients should go online at <https://medstar-evisit.com/> to speak with a provider and be screened for testing. Patients who are eligible for testing will be scheduled at a MedStar testing location.

University of Maryland Medical Center

Downtown Campus 22 S. Greene St. Baltimore, MD 21201

Midtown Campus 827 Linden Ave. Baltimore, MD 21201

Patients should call **211** to speak with a provider and be screened for testing. Patients who are eligible for testing will be scheduled at a Baltimore City testing location.

Mercy Health Services

Patients should call **410-332-4866** to speak with a provider and be screened for testing. Patients who are eligible for testing will be scheduled at a Mercy testing location.

Other testing locations across the state can be found on the Maryland Department of Health website:

<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/symptoms-testing>