



ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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TO: East Bay Mayors

CC: County Boards of Supervisors
County Health Departments

FROM: Terry Hill, MD, FACP, Medical Director (COVID-19), Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association (ACCMA)

RE: **Mobile and Remote Testing**

We understand that there is a high level of interest among East Bay cities, fire departments, and other organizations to increase availability of mobile COVID-19 testing sites in our community. As physicians, we fully recognize and deeply share your concern about the inadequacy of our current testing capacity. It has hampered our ability as medical professionals to effectively monitor and contain the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has been nothing less than a national travesty. We share your frustration and sincerely appreciate local efforts to address this gap in care.

We also believe, however, that efforts by fire departments, cities, community-based organizations and others will be most effective when initiated in partnership with and in support of public and private health care organizations that have the experience and capacity to perform testing at an appropriate standard of care. We have strong concerns about mobile testing that is already occurring without appropriate protocols for public health reporting or care coordination. We applaud the intent of these initiatives and share the desire to increase testing availability, but we believe there are better approaches for testing patients that will ensure that test results are communicated expediently to patients, primary care physicians, and public health. Health care organizations throughout our community – from hospital systems, to community health centers, to private practices – are implementing protocols that will enable more mobile and remote testing to be provided throughout the East Bay. It is important to emphasize that the primary limitation so far has not been the lack of capacity to perform testing within our healthcare delivery system; rather, it is lack of available testing supplies and insufficient lab capacity to meet demand.

Accordingly, we urge local cities, fire departments, community-based organizations, and others to incorporate the following standards in any efforts to develop mobile test sites in our community:

- COVID-19 testing should be done by health care organizations with the experience and capacity to perform communicable disease testing at an appropriate standard of care. Testing should only be performed by entities that are fully licensed and approved to carry out the tests and that comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

- Testing protocols should conform with state and local social distancing requirements and with current standards for use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Testing sites should be operated in a manner that does not exacerbate COVID-19 transmission.
- Positive and negative COVID-19 test results need to be communicated to local public health authorities to ensure that appropriate epidemiological actions occur, including issuing orders to self-isolate, performing contact tracing, coordinating with other agencies and providers, etc.
- Testing sites should have protocols in place for care coordination. Before testing, patients should authorize transmission of test results to their primary care physician (PCP) or another clinician who can promptly take steps to provide appropriate care and management. The testing site should take responsibility for communicating results directly to the patient and for giving the patient clear and explicit directions as to how to interpret the results. For example, patients should be aware that a single negative test does not rule out the possibility of COVID-19 infection. COVID-positive patients, even if asymptomatic, should be aware not only of the need for isolation but also the possibility for life-threatening deterioration. The testing site should provide documentation of results to both the PCP (or another clinician) and to public health as quickly as possible.

Especially when testing supplies and lab capacity are limited, it is critical that testing be administered in a manner that results in the greatest benefit to patients and the public health. We hope this guidance is helpful in any local planning efforts that may be underway to expand access to mobile testing in the East Bay.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Joe Greaves, ACCMA Executive Director, at 510-654-5383 ext, 6301 or jgreaves@accma.org.