

Communication to NEMG Ambulatory Providers  
3/22/2020

There are three clinical issues that leading to questions in our outpatient world and I would like to clarify them this weekend for those who may be on call for their practice or their friends and family—even before formal guidelines are available

1. Results of tests from the Ambulatory testing facility are starting to come in. At this time it looks like only 1% of COVID TESTING referred from ambulatory practices are positive(preliminary data). It is imperative to prioritize those who we send for testing. There are imminent shortages of testing swabs.
  - a. We ask that you reserve testing for those with persistent fever and significant respiratory symptoms or symptoms and a compelling clinical indication Do not test the common cold/URI symptoms. With the exception of nursing homes, it is not currently not our place to conduct epidemiology/transmission investigations.
  - b. We ask that you recommend aggressive self isolation and label people as "presumed covid" for all with respiratory symptoms with fever . These discussions are not a "feel good moment" for our clinicians or our patients but they are necessary conversations. We all want things to be different. They are not. We are all in this together and we must share limited resources to save as many lives as possible]
  - c. Test name changed in Epic--is now called SARS-COV-2 (COVID 19) PCR Quest or Ambulatory COVID testing
2. Azithro/hydroxychloroquine:
  - a. There are reports (no formal peer reviewed studies) that the combination of azithromycin and hydroxychloroquine helps to prevent ARDS in those with COVID. The case reports look promising
  - b. YNHHS Inpatient guidelines reserve this treatment for those with O2 sat <93% or those with comorbidity
  - c. Shortage of hydroxychloroquine preceded COVID and will be a larger problem if ambulatory clinicians prescribe this broadly

At this time we ask that you NOT PRESCRIBE these medications to those outpatients who test positive. Definitely do not prescribe for those who request to have these medications "on hand" as it will present a clear and imminent shortage for those who are severely ill nationally and internationally. A more formal review and update of the ambulatory algorithm will be released on Wednesday

3. We also ask that you do not order CXR on those with fever and cough with rare exceptions . If you do, please call ahead so that covid precautions can be followed