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Provider Guidance for Novel Coronavirus 2019

Wyoming Department of Health

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Background

A novel coronavirus has been identified as the cause of an outbreak of lower respiratory illness in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The virus is being called “2019 novel coronavirus” or “2019-nCoV.” Chinese authorities have confirmed more than 40 human infections in China with two deaths reported. Cases have also been identified in Thailand (2 cases) and Japan (1 case) among travelers from Wuhan, China.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people; others circulate among animals, including camels, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread via person-to-person transmission; examples of this include Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

Chinese authorities report most patients in the Wuhan City outbreak have been epidemiologically linked to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting a possible zoonotic origin to the outbreak. Given previous experience with MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, it is possible that person-to-person spread may occur.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will begin screening travelers from Wuhan City upon their entry into the United States at three airports as of January 17, 2020. These airports receive most of the travelers from Wuhan, China, and include San Francisco (SFO), New York (JFK), and Los Angeles (LAX). Travelers will be screened for lower respiratory symptoms and fever. Healthy travelers from Wuhan will be given an informational card to present to providers should they become ill during their stay in the U.S.

Clinical Description

Limited information is available to characterize the spectrum of clinical illness associated with 2019-nCoV. No vaccine or specific treatment for 2019-nCoV infection is available. Care is supportive.

Recommendations

Clinicians should obtain a detailed travel history for patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness. Clinicians should consider 2019-nCoV infection among patients who meet the following criteria:

1. Fever AND symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) AND, in the last **14 days** before symptom onset:
 - a. History of travel from Wuhan City, China OR
 - b. Close contact with a person who is under investigation for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill
2. Fever OR symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) AND in the last **14 days** before symptom onset, close contact with an ill laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient.

Clinicians should notify the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) immediately if any patients meet these criteria. Notification to the WDH should be made by calling 1-888-996-9104.

Diagnostic Testing

CDC is currently the only laboratory in the U.S. with the capability of testing for 2019-nCoV. CDC recommends collecting and testing multiple clinical samples from different sites, including all three specimen types - lower respiratory, upper respiratory, and serum specimens. Additional specimen types may be collected and stored. The WDH will work with clinicians and laboratories to coordinate collection and shipment of samples to CDC. Additional guidance for collection, handling, and testing of clinical specimens is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>.

For biosafety reasons, it is not recommended to perform virus isolation in cell culture or initial characterization of viral agents recovered in cultures of specimens from a person under investigation for 2019-nCoV.

Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations

Clinicians should notify infection control personnel immediately if they identify a patient meeting the criteria for possible 2019-nCoV infection. Patients who meet these criteria should be asked to wear a surgical mask as soon as they are identified and be evaluated in a private room with the door closed, ideally an airborne isolation room if available. Healthcare personnel entering the room to evaluate the patient should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and eye protection (e.g., goggles or a face shield).

Information about 2019-nCoV can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>. If you have additional questions, please contact Dr. Alexia Harrist at 307-777-7716 or alexia.harrist1@wyo.gov.