

Reimbursement & Policy

Funding for rural hospitals coming this week

Relief for rural hospitals and clinics is on the way this week. HHS will be distributing \$10 billion to rural hospitals, health clinics, and community health centers. Rural Idaho facilities will receive a total of nearly \$123 million. According to the information we've received, CAHs will have a base amount of \$1 million while clinics will receive at least \$100,000. The remainder will be apportioned based on 4% of each facility's operating expenses. The calculation will be based on the most recent available cost report, typically 2018.

This tranche of federal funds will be divided between 92 facilities in Idaho. We expect the funding will be received by hospitals via direct deposit.

SBA clarification for public hospitals

Public hospitals applying for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan are considered eligible as a nonprofit organization if they meet either the 501(c)(3) IRS code or if they are exempt from taxation under section 115 of IRS code which relates to governmental organizations.

According to the guidance issued by the SBA, "the Administrator will treat a nonprofit hospital exempt from taxation under section 115 of the Internal Revenue Code as meeting the definition of 'nonprofit organization' under section 1102 of the CARES Act if the hospital reasonably determines, in a written record maintained by the hospital, that it is an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is therefore within a category of organization that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a). The hospital's certification of eligibility on the Borrower Application Form cannot be made without this determination."

PPP loans, which may be forgiven, are being issued by the SBA through community lenders. Loans of up to \$10 million are available for organizations with less than 500 total employees, among other criteria. Loans may be forgiven if certain conditions are met by the borrower.

Resources & Equipment

Expanded testing

Idaho received 15 Abbott coronavirus testing machines through FEMA. Two machines will be placed in each of the seven Public Health Districts, with the remaining one being sent to the Department of Correction. Idaho is supposed to receive a federal shipment of 40,000 kits (swabs and transport medium) later this week.

Quality & Patient Safety

New CDC testing guidance and IHA testing resource

Yesterday, the CDC **updated the guidance for COVID-19 testing**. Three different areas were modified - antibody testing, testing priorities, and specimen collecting and reporting.

Regarding recommendations for antibody testing, the CDC stated they do not "currently recommend using antibody testing alone for diagnostic purposes."

The priorities for testing were also updated. High priority for testing should be given to:

- Hospitalized patients;
- Healthcare or congregate living workers, and first responders with symptoms;
- Residents in long-term care or other congregate living settings;
- People identified by public health officials or clinicians as a high priority;
- Those with symptoms of a possible COVID-19 infection;
- Those without symptoms from certain racial and ethnic groups.

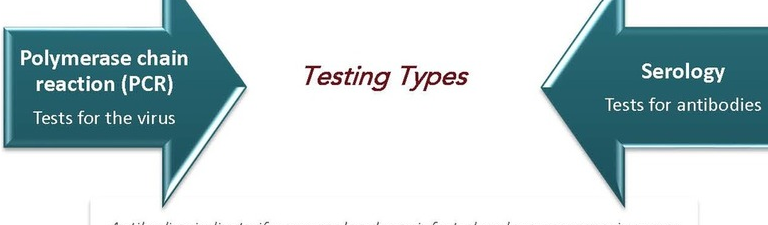
For collection and reporting, the CDC

- updated guidance on viral transport medium (VTM) to note that some point-of-care tests advise against its use;
- removed preference for NP swabs; and
- updated guidance for use of personal protective equipment while obtaining specimens.

IHA has developed a testing resource (below) designed to help people understand the types of testing available and well as some common questions. A more detailed resource is linked to as well.

SARS-CoV-2 testing ~ Virus versus Antibody Testing

4 May 2020



Antibodies indicate if a person has been infected and can measure immune response – although in COVID-19's case, the implications of a positive antibody test for being susceptible to a future infection are unclear.

Question	Virus Test (PCR)	Antibody Test (serological)
Why is the test used?	To find active infection of COVID-19.	To determine if someone has ever been infected.
How is the test performed?	Lab-based test using a nose or throat swab.	Lab-based test using a blood sample.
What does a positive test mean?	The person is currently infected with SARS-CoV-2.	The person was or is infected with SARS-CoV-2. Presence of antibodies doesn't mean a person isn't infectious to others or that they can't be re-infected.
What does a negative test mean?	The person is likely not currently infected with SARS-CoV-2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person has never been infected; • It is too early to detect antibodies; or • The person was/is infected but didn't have a sufficient immune response to develop antibodies.
When is it helpful?	To determine if an individual is currently infected and contagious to others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify individuals who have ever been infected; • To find potential donors whose plasma contains antibodies; or • To help determine the impacts of COVID-19 on the community.
When is it not as helpful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining past or future infections • In the presence of a very small amount of virus, either because an individual has a very low viral load or because not enough virus was collected during sampling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining active infections; • When only a small proportion of the population is infected, false positives can be common; or • When the test has low sensitivity or specificity which can lead to unreliable results.
Who should be tested?	<p>CDC recommends prioritized testing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitalized patients • Healthcare facility and congregate living workers and first responders with symptoms • Symptomatic residents in long-term care facilities or other congregate living settings • Persons identified by public health officials or clinicians as high priority • Persons with symptoms of a possible infection. • Persons without symptoms from certain racial or ethnic groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19. 	CDC does not currently recommend using antibody testing alone for diagnostic purposes.

Viral antigen testing is a third type of SARS-CoV-2 test, which is being developed to more quickly detect active infections or screen to identify those who need a more definitive test. This document will be updated as additional information is made available.

IDHW Testing Info

IHA Testing Resource

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