

### WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

### HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### PATIENTS WITH POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 who die should be immediately reported to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) by the following:

- 1) Call the ISDH 2019 Novel Coronavirus Death Reporting Line at 765-860-6053
- 2) Please include the following information in your report
  - a. Patient full name
  - b. Patient date of birth
  - c. Patient date of death
- 3) If the call is not answered by an ISDH staff member, please leave a voicemail with the information above as well as your name, your affiliation and your callback number
  - a. If additional information is needed to confirm the death, an ISDH staff member will return the call.
  - b. This line will be answered from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. daily, and voicemails received overnight will be received the following morning.
- 4) All deaths will be documented in NBS by ISDH staff at the time of receipt and will be included on the ISDH dashboard update the following morning at noon.

\*Please do not solely report deaths through NBS.

### PATIENTS WITH PENDING COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

Patients with pending COVID-19 test results who die should not be reported to ISDH until the tests are resulted.

- 1) If the test result is positive for COVID-19, report the case through NBS in accordance with current guidance AND follow steps 1-3 above.
- 2) If the test result is negative and the patient is still suspected of having COVID-19 due to the clinical picture, discretion is left to the provider to add a clinical diagnosis of COVID-19.

### PATIENTS WITHOUT COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

Patients who die and are suspected of having COVID-19 but were not tested before death should be referred to coroners for reporting.

Guidance to coroners for conducting testing and reporting deaths can be found here:

[https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_Coroners%204.8.20.pdf](https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN_COVID-19_Coroners%204.8.20.pdf)

### CERTIFYING CAUSE OF DEATH

Indiana Code requires the physician last in attendance to certify the cause of death and submit to the local health department using the Indiana Death Registration System no later than five (5) days after either initiating the registration process or receiving electronic notification of death from the person in charge of interment. It is important to continue to meet this timeframe so subsequent processes are not delayed due to a lack of death certificate.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>