



To: Facilities Serviced by HHL and HHL Employees  
 From: Heartland Health Laboratories, Inc.  
 Date: April 13, 2020  
 RE: Reduced Contact and NO Contact Modified Specimen Collection Procedure

Heartland Health Laboratory, Inc. (HHL) is committed to continuing to provide excellent laboratory services amid the COVID19 pandemic. With the CDC and local health departments recommending as little contact as possible, and several facilities who are not allowing outside vendors, it has become necessary for HHL to modify our current phlebotomy and specimen collection procedures. Current CMS guidelines, updated April 2, 2020, recommend that long term care facilities implement symptom screening for all incoming residents, which may include a 14 day observation period, and all current residents have their temperature taken daily. CMS also recommends that residents who enter facilities should be screened for COVID19 if testing is available.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\* At this time screening testing for COVID19 on non-symptomatic residents is not available, testing is being reserved for symptomatic residents only.**

**Purpose**

To outline and describe reduced contact methods of obtaining laboratory specimens from facilities that have a patient under investigation or in isolation due to a respiratory illness, or have restricted vendor access which includes the laboratory staff.

**Procedure for Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed COVID19 Residents**

- If there is a confirmed Positive in the facility, the facility staff **MUST** notify HHL, per 42CFR 483.80
  - Notify HHL by:
    - Phone 913-643-4278
    - E-mail Shawna Paulsen: [SGPaulsen@heartlandhealthlab.net](mailto:SGPaulsen@heartlandhealthlab.net)  
 Angela Linsky: [ALinsky@heartlandhealthlab.net](mailto:ALinsky@heartlandhealthlab.net)
- If a resident meets the ‘Person Under Investigation’ criteria described by Kansas Department of Health and Environment (see below)
  - **Dedicated facility staff MUST perform phlebotomy and non-blood specimen collection**
    - HHL Staff **WILL NOT** perform phlebotomy or collect non-blood specimens
  - HHL Staff will provide the necessary specimen collection supplies for the draw (vacutainer tubes, tourniquet, needles, swabs), and wait while the samples are collected.

Definition of Person Under Investigation (PUI) from KDHE

Epidemiologic Risk	&	Clinical Symptoms
Close contact <sup>^</sup> with a person that has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 and developed symptoms within 14 days of contact	<b>AND</b>	At least <b>two</b> of the following symptoms; fever*, chills, rigors, myalgia, malaise, headache, sore throat, lower respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing), new olfactory and taste disorders without an alternate more likely diagnosis.
History of travel <sup>§</sup> within 14 days of symptom onset	<b>AND</b>	Fever* <b>and</b> at least two of the following symptoms; chills, rigors, myalgia, malaise, headache, sore throat, lower respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing), or new olfactory and taste disorders without an alternate more likely diagnosis.
No source of exposure has been identified		

<sup>^</sup>Being within 6 feet for a prolonged period (10 minutes or longer) or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

\*Measured fever. Fever CANNOT be subjective

¥Recommended other respiratory tests are performed based on symptoms (e.g., rapid influenza, rapid strep, respiratory viral panel) and if positive laboratory test results, COVID19 will not be conducted

§History of travel includes travel outside of the U.S. to countries with travel advisories, and states with cases of COVID19 (find here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>), attendance to mass gatherings (e.g. conferences, cruises, concerts)

#### Procedure for New Admits under 14 day observation

- **Non-Symptomatic (Social Distancing)**
  - If the resident is under 14 day observation upon admission per facility protocol and not showing any respiratory symptoms
  - HHL Staff may perform phlebotomy and collect specimens
- **Symptomatic (Isolation)**
  - If the resident is under 14 day observation upon admission per facility protocol and **IS showing respiratory symptoms**
    - The resident will be considered a PUI
    - **Dedicated facility staff will be required to perform phlebotomy and collect non-blood specimens**
    - HHL Staff **MUST NOT** perform phlebotomy or collect non-blood specimens

#### Procedure for Facilities Restricting Access to the Facility

- If a facility is **NOT** allowing HHL staff into the facility, per facility protocol
  - The HHL Phlebotomist will drop off the following on scheduled day
    - Draw list
    - Supplies to draw the residents on the draw list.
  - Facility staff will draw the residents on the draw list
    - Document the following on the draw list
      - Time of draw
      - Where the resident was drawn
      - What tubes were drawn
      - Name of person performing venipuncture or specimen collection
      - If a blood sample was unable to be obtained
    - Place the draw list, blood specimens, non-blood specimens in a cooler
    - Have blood drawn by 8:00am
      - Unless another time has been agreed upon by the facility and HHL staff
  - HHL Staff will pick up the specimens and the draw list at the facility at 8:00 a.m.
    - If facility staff is unable to obtain the specimens by 8:10 a.m. a member of the facility staff will deliver the specimens to HHL as soon as possible.
      - Serum tubes must be centrifuged within 1.5 hours of draw
      - Failure to centrifuge within 1.5 hours may jeopardize the integrity of the specimen

Some helpful links are listed below.

42 CFR Subpart B – Requirements for Long Term Care Facilities

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title42/42cfr483\\_main\\_02.tpl](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title42/42cfr483_main_02.tpl)

CMS Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019

<https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and/qso-20-14-nh.pdf>

Evaluating and Testing Persons for Coronavirus Disease (2019) COVID19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>