

Advisory for Health Care Workers on the Novel Coronavirus Outbreak

February 03 2020, Monday

This update on the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak is for all Mount Sinai Health System (MSHS) faculty, staff, and students who directly care for patients.

Over the weekend, officials from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) for the first time referred cases of suspected 2019-nCoV infection to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmatory testing. This event was inevitable considering the number of travelers who come to New York City, and we should be prepared for patients to present to MSHS facilities with this disease at some point.

The current outbreak can be controlled with preventive measures and good epidemiological surveillance.

1. As we have recommended before, remember to **Identify, Isolate, and Inform** about potential cases. Identify any potential cases by using the infectious diseases screening tool. Any patient who presents to the health care system should be screened for travel to mainland China, exposure to anyone suspected or confirmed to have the 2019-nCoV infection, and respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Immediately isolate anyone whom the screening tool identifies as high-risk in a negative pressure room or a private room. Inform your facility's infection prevention department and the NYC DOHMH (or, for sites outside New York City, the New York State Department of Health), which will provide further instructions.
2. As recommended by the CDC, health care providers who are most likely to be exposed to a patient with the 2019-nCoV have undergone Just in Time refresher training on the donning and doffing of the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE). This PPE refresher training will continue as needed to avoid transmission to our providers in the health care setting.
3. Current commercially available diagnostic test kits will **not** detect the 2019-nCoV. Confirmation of the diagnosis of 2019-nCoV can only be performed at the CDC. Instructions for testing can be found [here](#).
4. While every effort will be taken to prevent exposure to any health care provider, anyone who is exposed to a patient infected with the 2019 nCoV without wearing

the recommended PPE may be subjected to self-monitoring and potential quarantine at home for 14 days. This decision will be undertaken in consultation with public health officials.

More information can be found on the CDC [website](#).

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