

FEBRUARY 27, 2020

HEALTH ADVISORY

Updated Information for Travelers Seeking Health Care, Consideration for COVID-19

Community Transmission of COVID-19 in California

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is providing this updated information regarding people presenting for health care, who have recently (within the prior 14 days) returned from international travel. Health care providers should continue to ask their patients about travel history. COVID-19 should be considered in patients with an appropriate risk for exposure to COVID-19 and presenting with fever, cough or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to monitor COVID-19 activity throughout the world. This week the CDC issued new travel advisories for an additional five countries. Here is a summary of all the current advisories:

- **Level 3 Warning** (avoid all nonessential travel)
 - China
 - South Korea
- **Level 2 Alert** (people at increased risk for serious illness such as those with medical conditions or of older age should avoid all nonessential travel)
 - Iran
 - Italy
 - Japan
- **Level 1 Watch** (normal travel precautions, avoid sick people, avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth; wash hands often or frequently use a hand sanitizer that contains 60% to 95% alcohol)
 - Hong Kong

It is important to note that these travel advisories do not necessarily correspond to risk of exposure for travelers, as the epidemiology of this disease **in these countries** is unique to each country. This is a rapidly evolving situation and continued spread of this virus is likely. Providers should routinely monitor CDC's COVID-19 travel page for updated guidance for travel risks at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

On February 26, 2020, the CDC confirmed an infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 in California in a person who reportedly did not have relevant travel history or exposure to another

known patient with COVID-19. At this time, the patient's exposure is unknown. It's possible this could be an instance of community spread of COVID-19, which would be the first time this has happened in the United States. Community spread means spread of an illness for which the source of infection is unknown. It's also possible, however, that the patient may have been exposed to a returned traveler who was infected.

Providers should monitor the CDC's evaluating and reporting persons for COVID-19 routinely at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html. Providers should call the NDDoH for a determination on testing for COVID-19. Except for people with high-risk exposures or severe respiratory illness, testing for COVID-19 in ill patients is likely not needed. However, consultation with public health may result in the initiation of a monitoring process that could include voluntary social distancing or other measures to reduce risk for the general public. For consultation, questions or to report symptomatic patients, providers can call 701-328-2378 or 1-800-472-2180.

Categories of Health Alert Network messages:

Health Alert Requires immediate action or attention; highest level of importance
Health Advisory May not require immediate action; provides important information for a specific incident or situation
Health Update Unlikely to require immediate action; provides updated information regarding an incident or situation
HAN Info Service Does not require immediate action; provides general public health information