



HEALTH ADVISORY: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

April 17, 2020

Summary: Amarillo Public Health increased the COVID-19 Status Level to level RED on March 30, 2020 because of evidence of community spread of the illness. Mayor Ginger Nelson introduced “All-In Amarillo”, a stay-at-home directive, purposed to increase measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. The directive focuses on:

- Persons not providing essential work services should stay home except for essential activities such as buying groceries and supplies, medical needs, getting restaurant takeout and participating in outdoor activities such as hiking and walking. A full list of allowed activities can be found at www.amarilloalerts.com.
- All activities outside of the home should be performed while keeping 6 feet of physical distance from other people whenever possible.

This directive has been extended by city council **through April 30.**

Case Count: As of Friday April 17, 2020 there are 110 cases in Potter County and 97 cases in Randall County.

Testing:

- Testing is available through the **Texas Department of State Health Services LRN lab** in Lubbock for hospital inpatients and healthcare workers. Please call Amarillo Public Health at 806-680-8980 for test evaluation. Please note, this is phone number is reserved for physician evaluation.
- **Drive-thru testing** is available in a limited capacity Monday through Friday. Call 806-378-6300 to find out more information.
- **Commercial Testing:** If a patient does not qualify for Texas DSHS testing, a specimen can be sent to a commercial lab for testing. LabCorp, Quest, and CPL are examples of some locally available commercial options.
- **Antibody testing** is now available in some capacities. PCR testing is still considered to be the gold standard of testing for COVID-19. Antibody testing may provide some information to a patient’s exposure to COVID-19, but not all antibody tests are indicative of acute infection.

Communication:

- COVID-19 is a reportable condition and requires immediate communication with Amarillo Public Health. All tests requested and resulted can be faxed to 806-378-6307.
- A call center and a website have been established for our community. The call center can be reached at 806-378-6300 Mon-Fri 8a-5p. The website is www.amarilloalerts.com.
- We still invite you to join us on Basecamp, a mobile communication platform for group or one-

Amarillo Public Health
Amarillo Area Public Health District
1000 Martin Road, Amarillo, TX 79107
(806) 378-6300
www.amarillopublichealth.org



HEALTH ADVISORY: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

April 17, 2020

on-one communication. If you wish to sign up for Basecamp, email mark.price@amarillo.gov.

Dr. Milton's Note to Physicians: The only remedy to the spread of this pandemic is self-isolation and social distancing. As always, use clinical judgement to determine whether the patient requires any resource, including laboratory testing and in-patient evaluation. The ability to test is becoming more limited.

Primary Care Providers: To reduce burden on the emergency healthcare system, recommendations for primary care clinics to evaluate patients are below. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html> - for full recommendations

All persons (including patients, staff, and visitors) should be screened for fever and symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the healthcare facility. Staff should wear a facemask at all times while in the facility.

Before Arrival

- Consider scheduling sick and well visits in different blocks of time.
- Triage patients via phone. Triage should determine if a visit is necessary or if the patient can be managed at home.

Upon Arrival

- If a visit is warranted, visitors and patients should wear their cloth face cloth face covering before entering the facility, even if they do not have symptoms. If a symptomatic patient does not have a cloth face covering, the facility may provide a facemask if supplies permit it.
- Limit points of entry to the facility and ensure that those entering the facility adhere to hygiene etiquette (using hand sanitizer, coughing and sneezing into tissues etc.)
- Avoid having patients symptomatic for COVID-19 in the waiting room. Place the patient in an exam room with the door closed, as soon as possible.
- Healthcare providers (HCP) should use hand hygiene and PPE (N95, gloves, gown, eye protection) to examine patient. Limit number of HCP who see patient.
- Examine other causes of infection: flu, strep, respiratory panel, and other point of care testing.

Specimen Collection

- If COVID-19 testing is deemed appropriate a variety of collection supplies and specimens are now accepted. The complete guidance can be found here - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>. HCP should wear all PPE during specimen collection
- Specimen collection kits can be requested from commercial labs (LabCorp, Quest, CPL).
- If a patient is tested for COVID-19, they should be isolated to home (unless hospitalized, then isolated



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Amarillo

HEALTH ADVISORY: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

April 17, 2020

in hospital) until test results return.

Positive Results: When there are positive cases of COVID-19, Public Health staff will conduct a thorough contact investigation. It is critical each provider report tests performed, and test results received through commercial labs.

Prevention:

- Wash your hands with soap and water on a regular basis.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue in the trash.
- Wear cloth masks in public areas where physical distancing may be hard to maintain.
- Frequently disinfect high touch surfaces.

Guidance: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) / Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)/ Texas Health and Human Service Commission (HHSC)

- DSHS resources for HCP - <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/#healthprof>
- CDC Evaluating and Testing Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>
- CDC Implementing Home Care - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>
- CDC Infection control guidance for HCP - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
- CDC – FAQs for HCP - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>
- CDC Webinars for HCP - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/training.html>
- Strategies to optimize PPE <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>
- HHSC LTAC COVID Website - <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/nursing-facilities-nf>
- Other community resources
 - CDC – What to do if you sick - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Faring-for-yourself-at-home.html
 - Performing Essential Activities Safely - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html>
 - Cloth Face Coverings - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Questions or requests for additional information can be directed to:

Amarillo Public Health - **806-378-6300**

After Hours Emergency Line (Healthcare Professional Use Only) - **806-680-8980**

Amarillo Public Health

Amarillo Area Public Health District
1000 Martin Road, Amarillo, TX 79107
(806) 378-6300

www.amarillopublichealth.org