

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers and Facilities and Schools
FROM: Vermont Department of Health

Changes to Vermont Department of Health Contact Tracing Procedures for Laboratory-Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

BACKGROUND

New information on general Vermont community transmission of COVID-19 infections has led to a change in Health Department contact tracing procedures for patients with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection. The change is summarized below.

1. The Health Department will make an initial call to the ordering clinician (or other responsible individual, such as an infection preventionist) at the facility linked to the patient.
 - a. On this call, the Health Department will gather available basic information (e.g., patient demographics, presenting symptoms and onset, hospitalization status, etc.). The ordering clinician (or facility) is responsible for informing the patient of their COVID-19 test result.
 - b. The Health Department will review strategies that the facility is implementing, and can consider implementing, to keep health care personnel from working while sick.
 - c. **Change in procedure:** The Health Department will no longer request submission of line lists of health care personnel with exposure to confirmed cases, as the presence COVID-19 community spread weakens our ability to effectively assign personnel exposure risk categories. However, facilities should still ensure that CDC's [guidance](#) for exposed healthcare providers is implemented.
 - d. **Change in procedure:** The Health Department will no longer make phone calls to health care providers who were potentially exposed to cases and will rely on facilities to communicate with their exposed employees. The Health Department has a document outlining [recommended actions for exposed health care providers](#).
2. After the patient has been notified of their test result, the Health Department will call the patient directly to deliver education and elicit additional information.
 - a. The Health Department will discuss with the patient isolation actions that they should be taking and advise them as to what information they should relay to

close contacts. The Health Department has a document that patients can share with their contacts, if desired, to outline recommended actions.

The Health Department will elicit information from the patient regarding recent activities that pose risks to other individuals, such as exposure to vulnerable populations, and will follow up on those situations as indicated.

NEW PATIENT RESOURCES

Please share these Vermont Department of Health resources with patients who are diagnosed with COVID-19 and for their close contacts:

- [“What to do if you are diagnosed with COVID-19”](#)
- [“What to do if you are a close contact of someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19”](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.