Testing Criteria for COVID-19 in the Emergency Department

- **Consider** patients who exhibit signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19
  - Fever (subjective or confirmed), and/or
  - Symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing).

**Symptomatic individuals at risk for severe disease who need testing:**

- Hospitalized patients of moderate or high concern.
- Older adults (age ≥ 65 years);
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions and/or an immunocompromised state;
- Healthcare personnel, who within 14 days of symptom onset had close contact with a suspect or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient.
- Close contact is defined as—
  - Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case
  - or —
  - Direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).
    - If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., gowns, gloves, mask, eye protection), the criteria for Person Under Investigation consideration are met.

*If providers need additional support with clinical decision-making call ID/COVID line, through PAS.

*If admitting a patient with low probability of COVID-19, contact the admitting clinician to discuss COVID testing prior to ordering. eg: patient with fever & known source, no respiratory symptoms.

**Procedure for ED Testing:**

- Provider places order for Flu/RSV only if patient is being admitted or is immunocompromised.
- Provider places order for COVID-19; if low probability patient, please discuss with admitting physician before placing the order.
- Complete VDH Requisition and answer prioritization questions on the form – it is available at Desk or through Epic link or on intranet site
- You no longer need to call VDH – 802-863-7240. You may call if you have questions.
- Collect a single nasopharyngeal swab to send to lab with VDH Requisition.
- Test Results will be returned to the ED Charge Nurse.
- If you get positive results from the ED Charge, please contact the patient to notify them of results and recommend isolation. VDH will contact them for contact tracing.
- Negative COVID-19 results will be called back to the patient by our quarantined staff assigned to this task, or through the Pharmacy/PA culture result process as a back up.
- Infectious Disease Consults are not required any longer to perform testing.
- Infectious Disease Consult is recommended for patients where there is uncertainty or disagreement and are being hospitalized.