
NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RELEASES GUIDANCE FOR USE OF RAPID POINT OF CARE ANTIGEN TESTS FOR SARS-COV-2

10/16/2020

Over the past several months new test methods for detection of SARS-CoV-2 have emerged including rapid antigen testing. Although there are limited data on the various platforms, rapid antigen tests have acceptable performance only when used under the following conditions:

- Testing is performed on symptomatic patients ONLY
- Test is performed within 7 days after symptom onset
- Analysis is performed in a CLIA certified laboratory

Providers and health systems performing antigen tests must coordinate with the NM Department of Health (NMDOH) to report ALL SARS-CoV-2 test results (i.e., positive and negative results) performed utilizing rapid antigen test platforms to the NMDOH. Contact the New Mexico Department of Health for reporting instructions and technical assistance with electronic reporting at 505-469-2104 or email Carmela.smith@state.nm.us or joseph.bareta@state.nm.us.

The performance of rapid antigen tests in an individual patient is highly dependent on the pretest probability or the clinical likelihood that the patient has infection AND that the test was performed in the appropriate testing window (early symptomatic phase).

Use of rapid antigen testing should be limited to symptomatic patients within 7 days of their symptom onset. A positive rapid antigen SARS-COV-2 test in this scenario should be considered a true positive and the patient should be given instructions for self-isolation, reported to NMDOH, and contact tracing should begin. A negative test in a symptomatic person should be considered presumptive, providers should consider retesting for SARS-CoV-2 by PCR and/or test for influenza A, influenza B, or other respiratory illness.

If symptom onset is greater than 7 days, do not perform rapid antigen test and instead consider collecting a swab for PCR testing at the laboratory.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

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