Reporting COVID-19 Test Results to the Mississippi State Department of Health

November 13, 2020

Introduction

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has established Rules and Regulations Governing Reportable Diseases and Conditions (https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,194.html) that outline reportable diseases and timelines, reporting responsibilities and required data elements for reporting. In Mississippi all SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) test results (PCR, antigen, antibody) are now reportable within 24 hours of diagnosis or test result.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued reporting requirements for laboratories to ensure complete reporting of all COVID-19 test results and complete demographic reporting for each COVID-19 test result. The MSDH has aligned its reporting processes with the federal requirements and is working with laboratories, hospitals, and providers to facilitate meeting state and federal requirements. To find out more about who should report, what data elements should be reported, and how to report, please see this link for more information https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/reporting-lab-data.html.

After December 1, 2020, the only acceptable mechanisms for reporting COVID-19 test results to MSDH will be through electronic means, either through standards-based Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR), the MSDH online reporting portal, the National Health Safety Network (NHSN-only for eligible long-term care facilities), through the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) Informatics Messaging Services (AIMS) platform that transmit electronic laboratory reports directly to MSDH, or using the National Flat File (NFF) that can be converted to an HL7 message using APHL conversion tools and then submitted to MSDH electronically. See **Reporting Options** below.

COVID-19 Electronic Laboratory Reporting (CELR) to HHS through the CDC

MSDH has fully implemented reporting of all COVID-19 laboratory results to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hospitals that report all laboratory results to MSDH through one of the acceptable reporting options provided below are not required to also submit aggregate COVID-19 laboratory data through HHS Protect. Reporting to MSDH satisfies this requirement.

Data Completeness

MSDH requires reporting of certain data elements with each COVID-19 laboratory report, as outlined in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (June 4, 2020 implementation guide available at https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/covid-19-laboratory-data-reporting-guidance.pdf). These include, but are not limited to, patient information including age (or date of birth) full

address (including county), phone number, race, and ethnicity. Reporting of complete information is a public health mandate, that is of even more significance during this pandemic. Incomplete reporting significantly impacts public reporting, leads to delays in case investigation, and diverts public health resources to determine this information.

Faxed Reports, Comma Separated Values (CSV) files

After December 1, 2020 MSDH will no longer accept faxed reports and Comma Separated Values (CSV) files for COVID-19 test results. After that date, COVID-19 test results reported in these formats will not meet the requirements for reporting. In the interim, hospitals, providers and laboratories should work to develop the capacity to report through one of the approved reporting options listed below.

Reporting Options

MSDH has established multiple acceptable options for reporting COVID-19 test results. After December 1, 2020, all COVID-19 test results reported must conform to one of the following methodologies. MSDH will work with facilities on an as needed basis to assist with determining the most appropriate method for submitting reports. Contact the MSDH Office of Epidemiology at COVID19.LabTesting@msdh.ms.gov to determine if you're ready to migrate to one of the accepted reporting solutions. Until December 1, 2020, if the facility is not reporting by one of the below accepted methods, the facility must continue to report COVID-19 test results as currently reported.

- **Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR)**

    This option is best for reference laboratories and hospital laboratories for SARS-CoV-2 testing performed by these facilities.

    - MSDH supports an ELR On-Boarding process to rapidly validate and accept COVID-19 lab results from the facility using national standards and specifications (HL7).
    - This is the same process used to report other reportable diseases results.
    - Allows for the reporting of all COVID-19 results.
    - Contact COVID19.LabTesting@msdh.ms.gov to schedule the hospital's or lab's onboarding for your facility.

- **National Flat File (NFF) Conversion**

    This option can be used for reference laboratories and hospitals when ELR is not an option and may be ideal with low testing volumes. It will require partnering with the facility's internal information technology program to convert the NFF to an HL7 message which can then be accepted by MSDH.

- o The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) has collaborated with partners to develop a new National Flat File (NFF) for reporting COVID-19 results.
- o MSDH supports using the NFF to facilitate reporting of all COVID-19 results. All NFF must be converted by the facility to an HL7 using the APHL NFF HL7 conversion tool.
- o **The facility is responsible for converting and validating; MSDH will facilitate the transfer using SFTP.**
- o APHL NFF tools are located at https://preparedness.cste.org/?page_id=136

- **APHL Informatics Messaging Service (AIMS) Platform**

  The AIMS platform may be an appropriate alternative for reference laboratories (and some hospitals).

  - o The AIMS Platform is secure, cloud-based messaging hub that facilitates routing of COVID-19 lab results to MSDH based on patient address.
  - o Reference laboratories with a national client base can connect once to AIMS and report nationally to departments of health throughout the US (including MSDH).
  - o For more information or to join AIMS, go here: https://www.aphl.org/programs/informatics/Pages/aims_platform.aspx

- **National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Point-of-Care (POC) Test Reporting Tool**

  The NHSN reporting tool has been developed specifically for reporting point of care rapid results from nursing homes and other eligible long-term care facilities. CMS has mandated that CMS certified nursing homes must utilize the NHSN reporting platform to report all rapid point of care test results.

  - o Requires CDC SAMS Level-3 security access to report through NHSN.
  - o CMS mandated reporting platform for CMS certified nursing homes to report point-of care COVID-19 test results performed at the facility
  - o An option for other long-term care facilities including assisted living centers and ICF-IID.
  - o To find more information, go to https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/index.html

- **On-line Reporting Portal**

  The online reporting portal is ideal for clinics and providers to submit manual entry of COVID-19 test results directly to the MSDH surveillance system. The current version requires clinics and providers to request secure access to utilize this option. See below.

- o An alternative option is submission by manual entry directly to the MSDH COVID-19 reporting portal.
- o Go here to request an account: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,15382,194.html

- **Reporting Options by Facility Type**

  Review the below table for an overview of reporting options by facility type.

COVID-19 Lab Results Sender	ELR	MSDH Reporting Portal	NFF/HL7	AIMS	NHSN
Hospitals	X	X	X	X	
Reference Labs	X	X	X	X	
Clinics and Providers (POC)		X	X		
Other non-traditional facilities performing POC		X	X		
Nursing Homes (CMS-Certified required)					X
NHSN eligible, non-nursing home LTCF*		X			X
Other LTCF (non NHSN eligible)		X			

*Assisted living, ICF-IID