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## Florida DOH issues emergency rule requiring COVID-19 reporting, effective Nov. 12, 2020

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Florida law has long required physicians who diagnose or suspect the existence of a disease of public health significance to immediately report such fact to the Department of Health. The Department, by rule, maintains the list of infectious or noninfectious diseases that are determined to be a threat to public health and may expand on this list if a disease emerges for which “regular, frequent and timely information regarding individual cases is considered necessary for the prevention and control of a disease specific to Florida.”

Based on this authority, the Department has issued an **emergency rule (64 DER20-34)** adding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) to the list of diseases or conditions to be reported. The special reporting requirements for COVID-19 are as follows:

- All test results (positive, negative, and inconclusive results), including screening test results, must be immediately reported and accompanied by the type of test performed (e.g. PCR, antibody, antigen).
- Point-of-Care Test Reporting Requirements – Practitioners, laboratories, facilities, and all others using point-of-care tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19, including those operating under CLIA waivers, must report both the negative and positive test results to the Department within 24 hours of test administration.

- In addition to the data element fields required by Rules 64D-3.030 and 64D-3.031, all test results reported must include the CLIA number of the reporting practitioner, laboratory, or facility.

In addition, the emergency rule requires that all test results must be submitted electronically, using one of three allowable reporting methods:

1. Electronic laboratory reporting for reporting entities that can generate an electronic comma-separated value (CSV) or Health Level 7 (HL7) formatted message.
2. Web portal for entities that perform COVID-19 testing and are unable to generate an electronic CSV or HL7 formatted message. Such entities may include long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, schools, colleges, universities, or other congregate care settings.
3. National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) COVID-19 module for CMS-certified long-term care facilities. Test data submitted to NHSN will be reported to appropriate state and local health departments using standard electronic laboratory messages.

The emergency rule requires that registration in one of these methods must be completed within seven days of the effective date of this rule, or within seven days of obtaining the ability to conduct testing. Until electronic





laboratory reporting has been established, test results must be submitted by fax to the Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Epidemiology confidential fax line, (850) 414-6894, or to the patient's local county health department. A list of county health department reporting contact information can be found at [www.FLhealth.gov/chdepcontact](http://www.FLhealth.gov/chdepcontact).

The Department of Health's announcement regarding the [emergency rule can be found here](#).

The Department has created an instructional PowerPoint that provides information about how physicians and

others that are providing COVID-19 testing can report their test results electronically to the Department. The PowerPoint can be accessed [here](#).

To begin the enrollment process in the Department's electronic portal, you need to email the COVID-19 Reporting portal team at [COVID19PortalEnrollment@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID19PortalEnrollment@flhealth.gov).

FMA members who have any questions regarding this emergency rule can contact our Legal Department at [legal@FLmedical.org](mailto:legal@FLmedical.org).

