

For Hospitals: Coronavirus Media Talking Points

All notifications to affected staff and other patients will be handled by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH).

DPH is encouraging hospitals and communities to follow COVID-19 guidelines on the [DPH](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's](#) (CDC) websites. If your facility has a patient suspected to have COVID-19, call DPH at 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) and ask to speak to a medical epidemiologist.

DPH will begin the process of testing the patient* and will send representatives to the facility to initiate a “contact investigation” with the hospital. Make a list of everyone with whom the patient may have come into contact, as DPH will need this list to conduct individual interviews about patient contact. They will then provide instructions on next steps based on the levels of risk and contact.

*If a patient tests positive for COVID-19, DPH *immediately* notifies the affected facility, ensuring that proper next steps are taken as quickly as possible.

Here are talking points for use if contacted by the media:

- All hospitals follow the Centers for Disease Control's [recommended infection prevention and control practices](#), including minimizing the chance for exposures, placing any patient with known or suspected COVID-19 in separate location, providing personal protective equipment to health care personnel (gloves, gowns, masks), and educating staff, patients and the community on proper hand hygiene.
- Local health officials, including the Georgia Department of Public Health as well as local public health departments, state that the risk of contracting COVID-19 is still very low.
- According to Cobb and Douglas Public Health, 80 percent of people who get the coronavirus have mild symptoms and do not require hospitalization.
- All hospitals are educating the public that the best way to prevent infection is by following the same preventive measures used during the normal cold and flu season: Wash hands regularly, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home from work or school if you are sick to prevent the spread of infection.
- All hospitals participate in emergency preparedness training year-round and are prepared to handle an influx of patients, should that occur.
- Hospitals communicate and coordinate directly with each other regularly and, in times of large-scale disasters, they also work together under the Mutual Aid Compact. All Georgia hospitals, including one Florida hospital, three Tennessee hospitals, and two Alabama hospitals have signed the compact, which states that hospitals will use best efforts to make necessary resources available to each other in the event of a disaster.