

PRACTICE ALERT:

Caring for the patient with Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Background:

- The 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Identifying the patient:

- At check-in for treatment at **any** AU healthcare clinic or hospital, patients should be asked if they have any respiratory symptoms including: Fever, Cough, Sneezing, Fatigue and Malaise.
- If patients report any of these symptoms, they should be asked to wear a cone mask while waiting to be seen.
- The following questions **MUST** be asked the following questions at intake:
 - Have you travelled outside of the U.S. in the past 14 days?
 - Have you had close contact with someone who has travelled outside of the U.S. in the past 14 days?
 - ****If patient answers “YES” to either question, then ask if the patient has recently visited China or has been in close contact with someone who has just returned from China in the past 14 days. PLACE CONE MASK ON PATIENT IMMEDIATELY. ****
- **Refer to the attached Decision Tree for additional criteria regarding Identification, Isolation and Informing Infection Prevention with any suspected cases.**

Isolating the Patient:

- Any patient who meets recent travel criteria, whether they are symptomatic or not requires prompt identification and implementation of appropriate transmission based precautions!
- Isolate the patient in a private room.
- Place the patient on Emerging Pathogens Precautions (this new subset of transmission-based precautions encompasses elements of both Airborne Contact Precautions).
- Negative pressure room preferable, if unavailable, obtain HEPA Filter by calling Central Distribution (1-3431) and place it between the patient and the door of the private room.
- Re-locate the patient to a negative pressure room as soon as feasible.
- Door **MUST** remain closed at all times. Appropriate signage must be affixed to the patient's exterior door.

Informing Infection Prevention:

- Once the patient has been properly isolated, contact the Infection Prevention Team (1-2224) during normal business hours or at 706-840-5861 after hours.
- Infection Prevention will contact Infectious Disease Attending, Director of Microbiology, and the Department of Public Health.
- To confirm or deny a case of 2019-nCoV, the Infection prevention team will guide bedside staff members on the process of specimen collection and labeling, if warranted.

Media and Communication:

- If contacted by an outside media source regarding the Novel Coronavirus, do **not** answer any questions and direct all questions to AU Communications at 1-3893.