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**Sent to: Directors of Public Health, Clinical Microbiologists/Laboratory Managers, Infectious Disease Consultants, Emergency Department, Respiratory Physicians, Acute Operations, Community Operations**

Dear colleagues

**Re: Notifying cases of 2019-Novel Coronavirus acute respiratory disease (2019-nCoV)**

### **Background**

Following the first reports of cases of acute respiratory syndrome in the Wuhan, China at the end of December 2019, Chinese authorities identified a novel coronavirus as the main causative agent (2019-nCoV). The outbreak has rapidly evolved affecting other parts of China and several countries outside of China have reported cases.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Director-General of WHO declared that the outbreak of 2019-nCoV constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) led by the Department of Health has agreed that 2019-Novel Coronavirus acute respiratory disease (2019-nCoV) will be specified in legislation as a notifiable disease. The Infectious Diseases Regulations will be amended to reflect this change in the Schedule in the coming weeks (following the appointment of a new Cabinet). At present 2019-nCoV is already notifiable under “any unusual clusters or changing patterns of illness” (Infectious Diseases (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2003, SI No. 707 of 2003).

Testing for 2019-nCoV is now available at the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL), for further details see [here](#). The latest case definition for 2019-nCoV is available [here](#).

### **For General Practitioners and Hospital Clinicians (clinical notifications)**

If you become aware or suspect that a person on whom you are in professional attendance is ill due to 2019-nCoV, immediately notify the case to the Medical Officer of Health/Director of Public Health in the local Department of Public Health by telephone. The contact details for the MOH/DPH and the counties they cover are available [on the HPSC website](#).



The notification form that should be used when notifying infectious diseases is available [here](#).

Furthermore, the latest algorithms for novel Coronavirus risk assessment for patients presenting to a primary care setting or for use in a receiving hospital are available [here](#).

### **For Laboratory Directors and Departments of Public Health**

In Ireland, the surveillance of 2019-nCoV cases is being managed using the national Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system; clinical and laboratory notifications and enhanced data collected by Departments of Public Health will be reported and collated in CIDR. The National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) is currently the only laboratory testing for 2019-nCoV in Ireland.

HPSC has provided guidance materials to Laboratory and Public Health users of the system on notifying 2019-nCoV in the CIDR.

### **Uses of the data and outputs from the 2019-nCoV surveillance system**

The notification of cases to the MOH/DPH will trigger a thorough investigation and implementation of control measures. The data will be used to inform public health actions to contain and prevent the transmission of the disease in the community and to health care workers and to determine the incidence, morbidity and mortality of the infection.

The number of cases of 2019-nCoV notified will be reported in the Weekly Infectious Disease Report, available at <https://www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/weeklyidreports/>

As the situation evolves, HPSC will conduct detailed epidemiological analysis and will produce more detailed reports for stakeholders.

HPSC as the International Health Regulations (IHR) focal point for Ireland will report to confirmed and probable cases to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization.

Yours sincerely,

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