

## **NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN)**

### **ADVISORY**

#### **New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) encourages more COVID-19 testing in pediatric populations**

February 1, 2021

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is encouraging all pediatric and family healthcare providers to continue testing their patients <18 years of age for SARS-CoV-2, especially if they are symptomatic or have been exposed to a confirmed case. New Mexico schools at all levels will be eligible to re-open in hybrid mode after February 8, 2021, and widespread COVID-19 testing is a crucial part of keeping children and staff safe at school. Additionally, New Mexico's children are currently under-tested; recent data indicate that adults aged 18+ years were 4 times more likely to be tested for COVID-19 than children aged 5-11 years.

A positive COVID-19 test in a child enables schools and communities to take appropriate isolation and quarantine measures for those exposed. The most reliable way for schools and NMDOH to identify COVID-19 cases is through the reporting of results from laboratories. Presumptive COVID-19 may not be reported and could lead to increased transmission, whereas testing ensures that there is notification to school and health officials. A negative COVID-19 test in a symptomatic child can also indicate the need for additional testing for influenza, RSV, or other causes during the respiratory virus season.

In addition to nasopharyngeal swabs, a nasal mid-turbinate swab, anterior nares swab, oropharyngeal swab, nasopharyngeal/nasal wash or aspirate specimen, or saliva specimen may also be acceptable specimens for certain types of confirmatory COVID-19 tests—please check with your laboratory or test manufacturer on the appropriate specimen types for a given test.

#### **Additional Resources**

- [NMDOH COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Webpage](#)

**New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the New Mexico Health Alert Network, go to <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085613008#/login> and click “Sign Up” at the bottom of the page. Provide all information on each screen, click on “Save and Continue,” and click on “Finish” at the end to begin receiving important health alerts and advisories.

#### **EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE**