COVID-19 Testing and Implications for Public Health Decision Making

TALKING POINTS

- Currently, negative COVID-19 test results have too much uncertainty.
- USET Tribal Epidemiology Center (TEC) cannot recommend community screening with the currently available tests at this time.
- When making important COVID-19 public health related decisions, positive test results are more reliable and provide a more accurate representation of the health of the community than do negative results.
- There are two types of tests being conducted. Abbott Test: ID Now COVID-19 (10 – 15-minute rapid test) and COVID-19 RT-PCR Test (approximately 3 hours).
- PCR testing generally provides more reliable results when compared to molecular tests like ID Now COVID-19.
- In the case that the infrastructure and capacity to implement community testing exists, the USET TEC recommends a drive-thru testing model using the COVID-19 PCR test with appropriate clinical support, public health follow up, and community education.
- Due to reliability issues and accuracy of the current COVID-19 testing, positive and negative test results should both be taken with a degree of uncertainty.
- Preventive measures, such as handwashing practices and social distancing, should be emphasized regardless of a negative or positive test results to protect healthy individuals and decrease the spread of COVID-19.
- Patients should review symptoms, preventive measures, and general education regarding COVID-19 to counteract the misinformation and anxiety about the disease.
- Inquiries regarding any current symptoms and answering any questions the patient may have should also be addressed at the time results are relayed.
- The use of cloth masks among all people while in public settings (i.e.– grocery stores, essential businesses) has been nationally advised, we at USET TEC advise this as well.

Please visit the following link for more information on the use of cloth masks: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html

www.TribalEpiCenters.org