TESTING CRITERIA:
If you are a healthcare provider who suspects your patient may have COVID-19 and you are requesting testing by the ADPH Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL), you should first complete the Novel Coronavirus Consultation Form.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND STORAGE:
• Health care providers should exercise standard, contact and airborne precautions, including the use of eye protection during the collection of specimens. For details see: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html
• For initial diagnostic testing, collect upper respiratory specimens. For patients with a productive cough, also collect a lower respiratory sample.
  I. Upper respiratory tract options
    a. Nasopharyngeal swab - Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Place the inoculated swab immediately into a single tube containing viral transport media. OR
    b. Nasopharyngeal wash/aspirate or nasal aspirate - Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, dry, leak-proof, screw-cap container.
  II. Lower respiratory tract options
    a. Sputum- Collect 2mL of sputum directly into a sterile, dry, leak-proof, screw-cap container. OR
    b. Bronchoalveolar lavage or tracheal aspirate - Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, dry, leak-proof, screw-cap container.
• Storage - Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours.

SHIPPING:
• Complete 1 requisition form for each specimen. Requisition forms can be found on the BCL’s opening page or at: alabamapublichealth.gov/bcl/assets/bcl_requisiton_form.pdf
  o Mark “Other Test” and write “2019-nCoV.” If known, add the patient’s COVID # in “Special Instructions.”
  o Include specimen collection date, date of symptom onset, as well as dates and locations of recent travel.
• If you are a WebPortal user, order “2019-nCoV” as the test. Select “Additional Information” and complete all appropriate data, including the patient’s COVID# if known.
• The specimens should be packaged as Category B in an insulated shipping container with frozen ice packs.
• The packaged specimens may be taken to your local county health department to be couriered to the BCL overnight (at no cost). Contact your local county health department to coordinate courier pick up time. OR
• Ship specimens directly to the BCL-EID at 8140 AUM Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

QUESTIONS:
If you have questions about specimen collection and shipping, call the Emerging Infectious Diseases Section (334-260-3400) at the BCL or email clab@adph.state.al.us.