

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 22, 2020

**TO:** Health Officers, Nursing Directors, Medical Directors, Epidemiology Program Managers, County Health Systems

**SUBJECT: Interim Guidance on Utilizing Texting to Assist with COVID-19 Case Containment**

The following interim guidance is being provided to County Health Department staff to facilitate communication with patients who have COVID-19 or are known to have been a close contact to a person with COVID-19. Guidance contained herein applies while social distancing guidelines prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic are in effect. Any concerns or challenges that may arise in the course of implementing this interim guidance should be addressed as appropriate through the local chain of command, and if necessary, elevated to the appropriate program office.

While conducting disease investigation and other public health activities authorized under Chapter 381, F.S., department employees may use the following communication methods as described:

**Texting**

Texting is intended to educate cases or contacts to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To limit disclosure of protected health information (PHI), employees must use only the template messages provided below.

Patient communication may only be conducted with a department-owned device, never with an employee's personal device.

**Use only the following scripts when contacting via texting:**

If you are using texting to get a call back:

1. My name is [employee name] with the Florida Department of Health in [xxx county]. If you believe you may have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, please click this link to learn how you can prevent spreading the disease: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/exposure/> When you have reviewed this document, please give the Florida Department of Health Epidemiology Program a call at (XXX-XXX-XXXX) for more information.
2. My name is [employee name] with the Florida Department of Health and I have information regarding an urgent health matter. Please call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.
3. I would still like to talk to you regarding an urgent health matter. Please call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

To provide education on preventing disease transmission:

**Florida Department of Health**

Division of Disease Control and Health Protection • Bureau of Communicable Diseases - Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) & Viral Hepatitis Section  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-19 • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1716  
PHONE: 850/245-4303 • FAX 850/414-8103

**FloridaHealth.gov**



**Accredited Health Department**  
Public Health Accreditation Board

1. My name is [employee name] with the Florida Department of Health in [xxx county]. If you believe you may have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, please click this link to learn how you can prevent spreading the disease: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/exposure/>

If you have questions, please call the [county] health department epidemiology program at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

If a person responds to a text message with another text message instead of calling, use an approved message to encourage the patient to call you.

1. I am not able to give you specific information in a text message. Please call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.
2. The information I have for you is confidential. I can tell you more when you call. Please call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

All texting communication must be documented verbatim in whichever data system employees would normally document.