

US will test people with flu symptoms for novel coronavirus

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The US will begin testing people identified by local health authorities as having flu-like symptoms for the novel coronavirus, a senior official said Friday, a significant expansion of the government's response to the epidemic.

"CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has begun working with five public health labs across the US to tap into their ability to conduct community based influenza surveillance, so that we can begin testing people with flu-like symptoms for novel coronavirus," said Nancy Messonnier, a senior CDC official.

The testing will initially be carried out by labs in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago and New York, but more sites are planned.

The announcement came as the number of confirmed US cases rose to 15, and about 600 people remained quarantined.

There have been almost 1,400 deaths—all but three in China, where the pathogen originated and where nearly 64,000 people have fallen ill.

The US has enacted a temporary travel ban on foreign nationals who have recently visited China, and quarantine measures for its own citizens returning from the province at its epicenter.

Messonnier added that those suspected of being exposed to the virus required repeated testing over a 14-day period, in case an early [test](#) returned a false negative.

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