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FROM: New York State Department of Health

Health Advisory: Disposal of Unused Expired COVID-19 Rapid Tests

Background

New York State (NYS) and the Federal government are distributing rapid COVID-19 tests to various types of facilities across the state. This includes rapid COVID-19 tests used at point of care (POC) by facilities approved by the Department of Health (DOH) to do testing on individuals as well as over-the-counter (OTC) rapid COVID-19 tests that are self-administered by an individual at-home. This advisory is being issued to address questions that DOH has received regarding the disposal of unused rapid COVID-19 tests that have expired.

Oversight of Regulated Medical Waste (RMW)

The packaging, labeling, and handling requirements, and the transport, treatment, and disposal of regulated medical waste (RMW) is under the authority of the DOH and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Regulations that define RMW are found at Title 6 NYCRR Parts 360 and 365 (DEC) and Title 10 Part 70 (DOH).

Disposal of Unused Expired COVID-19 Rapid Tests

- Based on current definitions of RMW, DOH, in consultation with DEC, has determined that unused rapid COVID-19 tests that have expired are not considered to be RMW and can be disposed into the normal waste stream as solid waste.
- In some instances, manufacturers have had the expiration dates of their rapid COVID-19 tests extended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Prior to disposal of any given test product, you should contact the test manufacturer or go to the manufacturer's web site to determine if the expiration date has been extended by the FDA.
- When disposing unused rapid COVID-19 tests that have expired, it is strongly recommended that this is done in a manner that limits access to the discarded tests and disposal occurs just prior to removal by your waste management company.
- When disposing of *used* rapid COVID-19 tests, users should follow the manufacturers' instructions.
- Since the material looks like medical waste be sure to first check with your solid waste transporter and the disposal facility as to whether they will accept the waste.

Please contact rmwp@health.ny.gov with any questions regarding this advisory.