“Coronavirus” infection vs COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

**What is coronavirus?**
Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause respiratory infections. There are several different kinds of coronaviruses, most of which have been in our communities for years. These common coronaviruses usually cause mild illnesses, like the common cold, but occasionally can cause more severe disease. We test for these viruses frequently at each of our hospitals.

**What is COVID-19?**
COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that was first identified in November 2019. COVID-19 symptoms also include fever, cough and/or shortness of breath. Testing for the new COVID19 virus is only available through the health department, and specialized labs, and is not performed routinely at our hospitals or clinics.