Public Health Announces Update to Statewide COVID-19 Testing Plan

Partnership with Walgreens will Expand Testing in Delaware

DOVER (July 15, 2020) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) on Tuesday released an update to its coordinated statewide plan to ensure all Delawareans continue to have access to safe and efficient coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing.

Delaware's updated COVID-19 testing plan strives to address key considerations such as access, equity and cost. The plan is structured to provide specific strategies for key populations defined in its original testing framework released in May, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations, including elderly Delawareans, members of low-income and minority communities, and certain front-line essential workers.

"One of the cornerstones of this update is to provide consistent, stable testing availability to residents regardless of symptoms or insurance," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "The basis for our plan is to show that testing options for Delawareans have expanded greatly from when this pandemic first began, and that Delawareans have easy access to COVID-19 testing of their choice, when and where they need it. Testing, and knowing your COVID status, is a key mitigation strategy in battling this pandemic."

Delaware's updated COVID-19 testing plan balances the need for:

- Predictability: providing members of the community with easy access and consistent messages about where to get tested to help with early detection;
- Flexibility: the ability to be responsive to outbreaks and urgent needs; and
- Sustainability: using resources wisely given the projected duration of this pandemic.

From the health care systems to primary care practices and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), a range of partner organizations play a key role in the state's COVID-19 testing strategy. Some testing services provide testing to individuals who are symptomatic or asymptomatic on a routine basis; other resources provide dedicated testing resources in response to community-based outbreaks. The Delaware testing strategy continues to evolve to one where all Delawareans have convenient access to testing when and where they need it. This includes an increased role for non-traditional venues such as pharmacies as well as urgent care centers, and even home testing kits, which are now more widely available.

The Division of Public Health also announced today a partnership with Walgreens to provide COVID-19 testing to residents, piloting the initiative at one location in each county starting Thursday, July 16. Participating locations include:

- New Castle County – Walgreens, 700 S. Ridge Ave., Middletown, DE 19709
- Kent County – Walgreens, 1215 S. State St., Dover, DE 19901
- Sussex County – Walgreens, 9202 Commercial Centre Drive, Bridgeville, DE 19933

Drive-thru pharmacy testing through this program will be available 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., seven days a week, and will be open to anyone who wishes to be tested, regardless of symptoms or insurance coverage. No appointment is required;

however, individuals should be advised that initial wait times may vary depending on volume of traffic at a site. Walk-up testing will also be available on site at the external drive-thru location. Customers should not come into the pharmacy for COVID-19 testing. The tests administered through this program will consist of self-administered nasal swabs, where the patient swabs the inside front of their nose. The specimen samples will be processed through the Delaware Public Health Laboratory.

"The opening of these new COVID-19 testing sites are part of Walgreens' ongoing commitment to provide greater access to testing in the communities we serve," said James Satterfield, Walgreens regional healthcare director. "Walgreens has a long history of stepping up to support our customers and communities in times of need, and we're pleased to be working in collaboration with the state of Delaware on this effort."

DPH will work with Walgreens over the coming weeks to add additional pharmacy locations to the list of testing sites, and is in discussion with other pharmacy chains to participate in the same effort. DPH is also working with a company to automate registration and reporting of results from these tests.

Additional information about COVID-19 testing, including a map and calendar of all of the available testing sites throughout the state, can be found at de.gov/gettested. The webpage was also updated today to make testing information easier to locate and navigate.

Since March 11, DPH has identified a total of 12,969 positive cases of COVID-19 among Delaware residents, and a total of 518 individuals have died from complications related to COVID-19. In addition, 48 individuals are currently hospitalized due to COVID-19 in Delaware, 10 of whom are critically ill. Updated statistics will be available at de.gov/healthycommunity during the noon hour today.

If you are sick with any of the following symptoms, stay home: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, chills, shaking with chills, loss of smell or taste. Other symptoms such as headache or digestive symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or lack of appetite) have been identified as potential symptoms related to COVID-19 and may prompt further screening, action or investigation. If you are sick and need essential supplies, ask someone else to go to the grocery store or the pharmacy to get what you need.

If you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or have symptoms of illness, make sure to distance yourself from others, particularly vulnerable populations. Older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions – including serious heart conditions, chronic lung conditions, including moderate to severe asthma, severe obesity and those who are immunocompromised, including through cancer treatment – may have a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Individuals who have complaints about individuals violating public gathering restrictions should contact state or local law enforcement. Concerns that a business may be violating operating restrictions should be directed to: HSPContact@delaware.gov. Questions related to business re-openings or operations as businesses reopen should go to COVID19FAQ@delaware.gov.

Individuals with questions about COVID-19 should call Delaware 2-1-1, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211, or email delaware211@uwde.org. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Medically related questions regarding testing, symptoms, and health-related guidance can be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov. Questions regarding unemployment claims

should be emailed to: UIClaims@delaware.gov.

In addition, the Division of Public Health asks any Delaware health care, long-term care, residential, or other high-risk facility with questions or concerns to email: DPH_PAC@delaware.gov or call the DPH Call Center at 1-866-408-1899 and press ext. 2.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus. The latest COVID-19 statistics can be found on the Division of Public Health's My Healthy Community data portal at de.gov/healthycommunity.