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COVID-19 testing continues to be important part of reducing spread

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO -- As COVID-19 vaccines continue to become more widely available, the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) reminds Missourians that the other preventative measures taken over the past year have not diminished in the fight against this virus.

Good hand washing, maintaining physical distance from those outside of your household and wearing a mask when that is not feasible still remain vital to controlling the spread of COVID-19. Once eligible, getting vaccinated is highly encouraged and highly effective. Another piece of the overall mitigation strategy that continues to be encouraged is testing.

"We learned quickly in the early days of this public health crisis how important testing was to prevent the spread of the virus, and it is part of the reason why Missouri has the second lowest case growth rate among all states in the country," said Dr. Randall Williams, director of the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). "However, we remain concerned about variants arising throughout the US, so this means prevention measures and widespread testing are that much more crucial to move us beyond COVID-19."

The State of Missouri has been hosting community testing events in locations throughout the state since April 2020 with the help of many partners. These events allow for a convenient testing option even for those who do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

For the remainder of March, the State and the Missouri Primary Care Association will host testing events 2-3 times per week in Kansas City and St. Louis areas. Additionally, events are planned for the following counties: Barton, Boone, Buchanan, Callaway, Camden, Christian, Cole, Crawford, Dent, Greene, Howell, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Lafayette, Mississippi, Monroe, Pettis, Phelps, Ralls, St. Charles, Taney and Webster.

More events may be scheduled in targeted communities if new case counts or other indicators identify the need for additional testing.

It is important to remember that a COVID-19 test is a one-time assessment, and will only show if you are infected at the time of the test. Now, if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, there is no question that

you should seek testing at a **community testing event (https://mako.exchange/splash/MOmakotesting/)** or your **nearest testing site (https://mophep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/580bb6a25b5b44859bc73013ebf0235f)**. Those who have had significant contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 should also consider being tested.

Community testing events are continually being scheduled and added to the listing found at **health.mo.gov/communitytest (https://mako.exchange/splash/MOmakotesting/)** where registration takes place. These tests are completely free and available to any Missouri resident.

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