News Release
March 8, 2021

Contact information

State announces COVID-19 testing site in Carver County, urges testing to combat B117 variant

Chanhassen pop-up will offer saliva testing to all

Today, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) announced a new temporary COVID-19 testing site at the Chanhassen Recreation Center. The state is recommending testing in Carver County in response to a rapidly growing outbreak of B117 variant COVID-19. Testing at this site will occur Thursday, March 11 through Saturday, March 13, and Thursday, March 18 through Saturday, March 20. Appointments are encouraged but not required.

"Testing is a key component of our strategy to protect Minnesotans from COVID-19," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. "Through a robust, collaborative statewide testing program, we have made great progress in removing obstacles to testing. The variants circulating now present added risk that we may see another surge in cases and we need everyone to do their part to prevent that from happening. When combined with social distancing, masking, avoiding crowds and staying home when sick, testing can help us slow the spread of COVID-19 while we work tirelessly to get as many Minnesotans as we can vaccinated."

Since late January, at least 84 cases of COVID-19 have been linked to participants in both school-sponsored and club sports activities, including hockey, wrestling, basketball, alpine skiing, and other sports. In addition, health officials have seen increases in cases in Carver County gyms and fitness centers, with many of the cases linked to the sports-related cases. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has observed a concerning increase in the rate of growth of cases in Carver County over the past month (a 62% increase between the week beginning Jan. 27 to the week beginning Feb. 24). Case rates in Carver County are now approaching rates seen in October 2020, and a high proportion (35%) are under age 20.

"Our COVID-19 testing strategy has been data-driven since day one with the goal of offering low-barrier testing to every Minnesotan who needs it," said Dan Huff, MDH assistant commissioner for health protection. "The sooner we identify positive cases, the sooner infected people can take steps to isolate and stop the spread of the virus. We are increasingly concerned about dramatic increases in cases, particularly in Carver County where the B117 variant has been confirmed. People can take control of this situation by getting tested, masking, and limiting social interactions."

Through recently completed whole genome sequencing of a portion of the sample specimens from the outbreak cases, health officials confirmed 27 cases of the B117 variant, a highly contagious and potentially more virulent variant first identified in the United Kingdom. Cases have occurred in athletes, coaches, students, and household contacts. Multiple schools, both public and private, have confirmed cases tied to the variant strain cases. Many of the people with B117 variant COVID-19 attended school or sports activities while infectious. The concern is this highly contagious variant has the potential to spread exponentially and quickly across youth who are largely unprotected by vaccines.

Last week, the outbreak prompted state health officials to call for youth athletes and parents to double down on measures to prevent the spread of the virus, including weekly testing of athletes and coaches: Clusters of B117 variant COVID-19 cases in Carver County prompt warning from health officials

The Chanhassen site is a coordinated effort between the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota National Guard, Carver County, the city of Chanhassen, Chanhassen Recreation Center, and Vault Health.

“The city of Chanhassen is proud to partner in this effort in support of our community,” said Mayor Elise Ryan, City of Chanhassen. “Thank you to our incredible team for quickly adapting to this important need.”

As with all of the state’s community testing sites, testing at the site is offered at no cost. Participants will be asked for their health insurance information so the state can bill their insurance company on their behalf. If a person is uninsured or if insurance doesn’t cover some or all of the cost, the state will cover the difference, so that testing remains open to all at no cost.

Testing is open to anyone who believes they need a COVID-19 test, with or without insurance. State guidance on who should get tested was recently updated and can be found on the Minnesota COVID-19 Response webpage, Who Should Get Tested?.

Those who arrive for a test should avoid eating, drinking, chewing, or smoking anything for at least 30 minutes before providing a sample. Once they arrive at the site, they will self-administer the test by salivating into a funnel attached to a small tube. Clinic staff will be available on-site to monitor the collection process.

Walk-ins are available. People seeking testing at the Chanhassen site can schedule a test through Vault Health. Tests will be processed in Minnesota at the saliva lab in Oakdale run by Vault Health and Infinity Biologix (IBX). Results will be provided via email in approximately 48-72 hours.

Testing site location:

Chanhassen Recreation Center
2310 Coulter Blvd.
Chanhassen, MN 55317

Hours of operation:

Thursday, March 11, 2 – 8 p.m.
Friday, March 12, noon – 6 p.m.
Saturday, March 13, noon – 6 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2 – 8 p.m.
Friday, March 19, noon – 6 p.m.
Saturday, March 20, noon – 6 p.m.

The state also offers at-home COVID-19 saliva testing for everyone who lives in Minnesota, with or without symptoms, at no cost. To learn more and order a test, visit COVID-19 Test at Home.

-MDH-

Minnesota Helpline:

For questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, call 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504.

Mental Health Crisis Line - Call: **CRISIS (**274747)

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