COVID-19 TESTING FRAMEWORK

STATE OF DELAWARE

MAY 8, 2020

On Friday, May 8, 2020, the State of Delaware announced a significant expansion of Delaware's statewide COVID-19 testing program.

The statewide program – which will allow for 80,000 tests in Delaware monthly – will be implemented in partnership with the Division of Public Health (DPH), the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), Delaware hospital systems, primary care physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, pharmacies, long-term care facilities, and community partners.

DPH is currently conducting approximately 500 tests weekly at Delaware's Public Health Laboratory in Smyrna, Delaware. Hospital systems are conducting more than 3,500 tests weekly through community testing sites statewide.

To safely begin to reopen Delaware's economy under guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the White House Task Force, Delaware must dramatically ramp up its testing program.

Delaware's new testing program is based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Delaware's Expanded Testing Program

The State of Delaware will supply partner organizations with testing supplies to more effectively reach Delawareans where they need access to COVID-19 tests. Delaware's list of partners includes primary care physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, pharmacies, long-term care facilities, and community partners.

The State of Delaware will prioritize testing under the new statewide program for:

- Any symptomatic individual
- Any person with known COVID-19 exposure
- All long-term care residents
- Members of vulnerable communities (low-income, Latino, African American, seniors)
- Certain front-line essential employees

PARTNER ROLES

State of Delaware – Division of Public Health (DPH) and Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA):

The State of Delaware has purchased 200,000 saliva-based tests from Curative, a Los Angeles-based testing company that has supplied COVID-19 tests to Los Angeles and Atlanta. The tests are scheduled to begin arriving in Delaware on Friday, May 8.

Medical professionals use PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests to diagnose individuals who are currently sick with COVID-19. The tests can detect small amounts of viral genetic material. The purchase of 200,000 tests from Curative will dramatically expand the state's capacity to conduct PCR testing in primary care offices, community health centers, pharmacies, and in a variety of community settings to meet the needs of Delawareans where they are.

DEMA will manage the testing supply chain.

These saliva tests, in addition to nasal swab tests sent to Delaware's public health laboratory, and hospital-based testing, will constitute the state's primary testing mechanisms for at least the next several months.

Delaware's Hospital Systems:

Our hospitals are a critical partner in COVID-19 testing statewide, and particularly in vulnerable communities where Delawareans have experienced higher levels of infection and transmission.

In partnership with Delaware's hospital systems, Delaware has established community testing sites in hot spot areas of Sussex County, and in other vulnerable communities.

Through this partnership, nearly 35,000 tests have been completed. Most tests have been processed through commercial laboratories. We will continue to rely on data to identify potential hot spot communities, and work with hospital systems and community organizations to increase testing access for vulnerable populations statewide.

Primary Care Physicians and Pharmacies:

Primary care physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, urgent care and pharmacies will have an important role to play in COVID-19 testing and surveillance using a combination of PCR and antibody testing. Nasal swab PCR testing and blood testing for antibodies can be sent to Delaware's Public Health Laboratory or a hospital or commercial laboratory. In some cases, testing can be conducted on site.

Alongside these partners, Delaware will create a COVID-19 surveillance network to test symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals, with additional testing for vulnerable populations. The testing results from primary care physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and long-term care facilities are critical to track the activity of this virus and communicate risks to Delaware communities.

Delaware Employers:

DPH is working to develop a list of priority employees to be tested. We expect additional Delaware employers to express interest in employee testing programs. Essential employers who have testing capabilities may manage their own testing programs. The Division of Public Health will issue guidelines to direct these efforts.