New Jersey's Five Developmental Centers for Adults with Developmental Disabilities to Implement COVID-19 Saliva-Based Tests from Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy, alongside Brian Strom, Chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences, today announced that New Jersey's state-run residential facilities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities will implement COVID-19 saliva-based testing developed by Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences. The New Jersey Department of Human Services will utilize these tests as part of its strategy to do universal testing of all staff and residents at New Jersey's five developmental centers for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, which have approximately 1,250 residents and 4,300 staff. The state is working to expand this pilot program and is exploring options to test additional state workers and individuals in the state's care.

"A robust and aggressive testing program is vital in order for us to protect our most vulnerable populations and contain future outbreaks of COVID-19," **said Governor Murphy.** "Rutgers University's FDA-approved saliva-based test system will significantly expand our testing capability by providing rapid results and the critical data necessary to determine when we can safely reopen New Jersey. I am grateful for our partnership with Rutgers University and incredibly proud of their innovative breakthrough to help New Jersey defeat this virus."

"Rutgers' mission is to serve the public and we're proud to partner with our state government to expand testing for all New Jerseyans, including our developmentally disabled community," **said RBHS Chancellor Brian Strom.** "Rutgers RUCDR's new saliva-based test is a game changer in terms of expanding testing nationwide and we're awaiting FDA approval of the test for self-collection at home, which will only further increase the number of screenings. RUCDR's research exemplifies the tremendous efforts of Rutgers health care professionals at all levels, from the lab to the frontlines of patient care."

"Human Services is continuing to work 24/7 to support and protect individuals with developmental disabilities across our State. Our work includes supporting COVID-19 testing for the New Jerseyans who call our developmental centers home and the critical staff who care for and support them," **said New Jersey Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson.** "We appreciate the opportunity to work with our flagship New Jersey state university on testing as we continue to take action to support our residents in this unprecedented and challenging time. Today's announcement builds on the Department's focus on prevention and mitigation in our centers through restricting visitors; ceasing community outings; conducting staff screening including temperature taking; and, reviewing infection control, cleaning and cohorting procedures. The Department will continue to take all available actions to support our residents and staff."

"As we work to expand testing across the state, we will be prioritizing the most vulnerable populations like those who reside in these centers," **said New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli.**

Department of Human Services

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Commissioner and Key Staff

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Disability Programs
Family Programs
Welfare Services
Mental Health
Addiction Services
Aging Services

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