Governor Carney Announces Proactive Community-based COVID-19 Testing

Partnerships, collaboration to increase access to testing statewide

WILMINGTON, Del. — Governor Carney on Friday provided an update on Delaware's statewide testing plan, which aims to increase access in Delaware to 80,000 tests monthly. The plan is a partnership with the Division of Public Health (DPH), the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), Delaware hospital systems, primary care physicians and other providers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, pharmacies, and community-based organizations like nonprofits and churches.

Vulnerable populations, including elderly Delawareans and members of low-income and at-risk communities, are among those prioritized for community-based testing under the plan. Other priority groups include symptomatic individuals, anyone with known exposure to COVID-19, and certain front-line essential workers.

The state is working with partners to transition from symptom-driven hospital-based testing operations, to a proactive, collaborative community-based testing strategy. The state's evolving approach is possible due to an increase in testing resources, and has two key components: Curative drive-through events open more broadly to the public occurring multiple times a week across the state, and targeted walk-up and drive-through events in areas of Delaware that are home to citizens who are more vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 because of long-standing inequities.

"We know that widespread community testing needs to be in place before we can safely reopen our economy. With the help of our partners, I am confident that we have put a plan in place that gets us to the starting line," said **Governor Carney**. "Through this collaborative effort, we will be able to diagnose symptomatic Delawareans and detect asymptomatic spread with this community-based strategy. I want to thank all of our partners who are stepping up for their fellow Delawareans during this crisis. Delawareans should continue to stay vigilant. Keep your distance from others. Wear a face covering in public settings, including on the boardwalk. Wash or sanitize your hands frequently. Now is not the time to let up."

Locations for testing events are being driven by data related to high incidence rates for COVID-19 cases. Testing times and locations will continue to be posted on a new testing calendar on the coronavirus.delaware.gov/testing website several days in advance. In the case of Curative saliva-based events, Delawareans need to sign up for an appointment ahead of time and watch an instructional video on the same webpage. Other community-based events will continue to target locations in vulnerable communities who have historically lacked access to healthcare and social service resources.

The first community testing event using the newly acquired Curative, saliva-based tests took place last week in partnership with Nanticoke Hospital in Seaford, where approximately 600 individuals were tested in four hours. An additional 900 individuals were tested at an event in Middletown on Thursday in partnership with ChristianaCare.

The next scheduled large-scale Curative drive-through testing event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday May 24, at the DelDOT Administration Building (located on the campus of the Dover DMV). Pre-registration at delaware.curativeinc.com to reserve your place and reduce wait time is strongly encouraged.

Limited on-site registration will be available.

Additional vulnerable community-based testing sites and testing of senior high-rise housing locations in Wilmington is planned for next week in partnership with hospitals, the state and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

In addition to community-based testing sites, the Division of Public Health continues to work with long-term care facilities (LTCs) to implement universal testing and is working with medical providers and LTCs to create a sentinel surveillance system for COVID-19. DPH will also soon release testing guidance for businesses. Hospital systems will continue to administer tests both on site and in the community.

Delaware's new testing strategy will be implemented alongside a robust contact tracing program to isolate infected individuals and their close contacts. More information about contact tracing can be found: coronavirus.delaware.gov/contact-tracing. The State's vendor NORC is scheduled to begin accepting applications on its website: norc.org/WorkingAtNORC at 5 p.m. Friday May 22.

Anyone with a question about COVID-19, should call Delaware 2-1-1 or email info@211delaware.org. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Medically related questions can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

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