COVID-19 Vaccine (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp) – Find out when, where, and how to get your shot.

Vaccine Rewards (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine-rewards/index.jsp) – Your shot to a safe summer. Claim your reward by June 30.

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Governor Walz Announces Significant Expansion in Statewide COVID-19 Testing Access

New sites around state through National Guard; saliva testing to be available at MSP airport

November 9, 2020

[ST. PAUL, MN] – Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan today announced a significant expansion in COVID-19 testing access, with the addition of more than a dozen new testing locations opening across the state over the next two weeks. All of the new testing sites will continue to offer free, "no barrier" COVID-19 testing. Testing will be free and available to anyone who wants to be tested whether they have symptoms or not, and it will not require insurance.

Governor Walz made today's announcement at the new saliva testing site at the Minneapolis Convention Center in downtown Minneapolis, which opened today. The expansion in access to testing also includes the opening of 11 sites operated by the Minnesota National Guard that will remain open through at least the end of the year, in partnership with local public health staff. These 11 sites will offer a mix of saliva and nasal PCR tests. Additionally, the state will be opening its 9th saliva testing site on Thursday, Nov. 12 at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport.

"Over the last week, Minnesotans saw our COVID-19 positivity rate climb higher than ever before. We have entered a dangerous phase of this pandemic, and our testing strategy is key to controlling the spread," said Governor Walz. **"So many people are spreading the virus before they know they have it. That's why we've seen great demand for testing across the state, and today's announcement brings us closer to getting the virus under control."**

"Expanding access to COVID-19 testing to all communities across the state is critical to keeping Minnesotans informed and safe," said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **"These testing opportunities are cost-free, barrier-free, and pain-free. We need all Minnesotans to take this pandemic seriously and get tested."**

The Minnesota National Guard will provide support with logistics for each of the 11 sites, which will open on Monday, November 16. Ten of the 11 sites will be located in armories. Locations will all be announced later this week. These sites will be open five days a week, through at least the end of the year. They will replace the pop-up community testing events that have been underway for several weeks, which would come into a community for just 2 to 3 days of testing.

"The rate of case growth we are seeing is very concerning. Ultimately, our goal is to get out there, do as much testing as we can—with case investigation, contact tracing, and the necessary isolation—to stop this disease from spreading," said Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm. **"Growing and diversifying our testing options in combination with all Minnesotans doing their part to practice social distancing, wear masks, wash their hands, avoid large gatherings, and stay home when sick is what will help us turn things around in our state."**

Saliva testing will also be open to the public at the MSP airport beginning Thursday. Testing will be available in Terminal 1, Level 2 of the Blue Ramp, in the former rental car service-counter area. Anyone coming for testing will be provided a free voucher for parking, and the testing site is also accessible via public transit. The airport testing site will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. The state is partnering with the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) to provide the testing.

"The Metropolitan Airports Commission is happy to partner with the state to provide increased capacity for COVID-19 testing in the Twin Cities area," said Brian Ryks, the CEO of the MAC. **"COVID-19 testing is integral to the health and safety of Minnesotans during this pandemic, and the airport's central location makes it convenient for thousands."**

The state plans to open several more saliva testing sites in the metro, as well as make the mail order program available statewide yet this month. The state has opened eight saliva testing sites in partnership with Vault Medical Services and Infinity BiologiX in Brooklyn Park, Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Saint Paul, St. Cloud, and Winona, with the Minneapolis Convention Center opening to the public for saliva testing today. All saliva tests will be sent to the new lab in Oakdale, with results available within 24-48 hours. All nasal swab tests will be tested through Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota, with results available within 2-3 days.

“In Minnesota, we are strongest when we work together. I’m grateful for our partnership with community leadership, local public health officials, health care systems, private partners, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, and many others that made these testing opportunities possible in Minnesota,” said Governor Walz. **“We need all Minnesotans to come together and remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19 as we prepare for a long winter ahead.”**

For more information on how and where to receive a COVID-19 test, visit mn.gov/covid19/ (https://mn.gov/covid19/).

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