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Governor Carney, DHSS announce Statewide COVID-19 Testing Plan in Coordination with Delaware Health Care Systems

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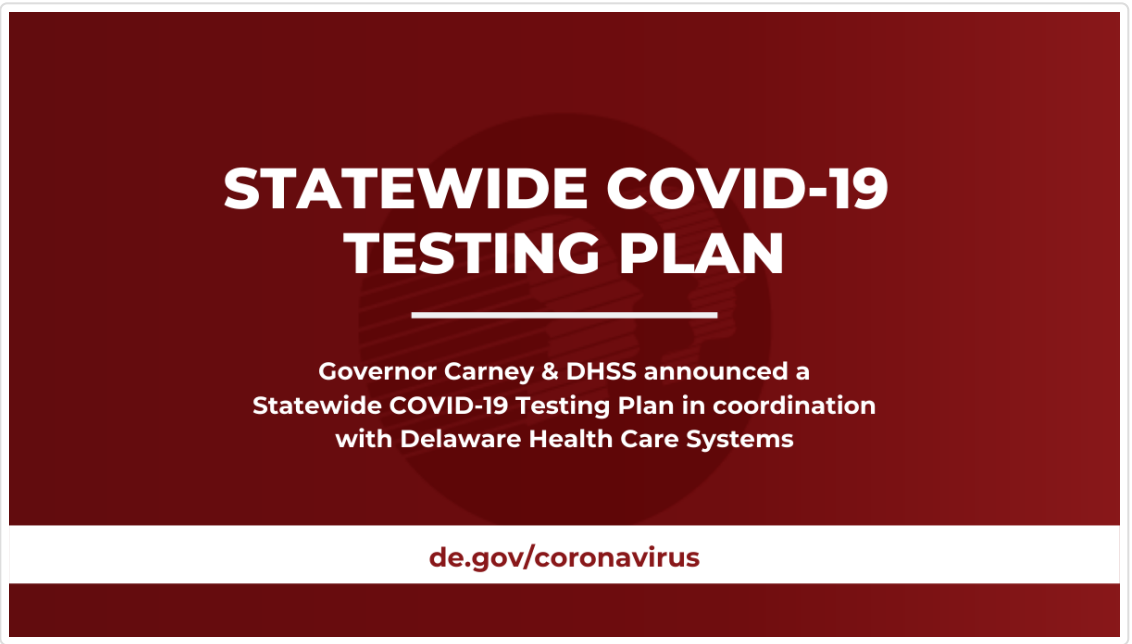

DOVER, Del. – Governor John Carney, along with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), announced on Friday a coordinated statewide plan to ensure individuals with symptoms consistent with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) have access to safe and efficient testing in Delaware. Tests will be administered at no cost to the patients.

Through a collaborative effort between the Division of Public Health (DPH), Delaware Healthcare Association, and each of the health care systems in the state, this statewide plan aims to streamline the testing process, reduce the burden on the health system, ensure the safety of patients and health care workers, and better meet the COVID-19 testing needs of Delawareans.

> "As this situation continues to evolve, we know that we will continue to see an increase in positive cases of the virus. It is critically important that we all work together to reduce the burden on our health system and keep Delawareans safe," said **Governor Carney**. "Our goal right now is to limit the spread of the virus. The community-based testing plan we are announcing today builds on our already established infrastructure in Delaware's health system in an effort to make testing more readily accessible for those in need."

Beginning Monday, March 23, Delaware health systems will operate standing health facility test sites, where health care staff will test individuals who have been evaluated by a medical provider and have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. A physician order or prescription is required.

Standing health facility test sites will include:

- New Castle County: ChristianaCare will operate two testing sites, one in Newark, one in Wilmington; Saint Francis Healthcare will operate one site in Wilmington.
- Kent County: Bayhealth will operate one testing site in Dover.
- Sussex County: Beebe Healthcare will operate two testing sites, one in Millsboro and one in Frankford; Nanticoke will operate one testing site in Seaford.

Symptomatic individuals who want or need a COVID-19 test and who have access to a health care provider will need to be evaluated by their provider. Teleconsultation is preferred unless the provider determines in-person consultation is needed. If COVID-19 symptoms are present, the patient can be referred to a standing health facility test site.

Individuals who do not have access to a health care provider can call the DPH Call Center, or call centers run by Christiana Care or Bayhealth, and medical personnel will determine if the caller meets criteria for testing. Medical personnel will provide the appropriate documentation that will give the caller access to testing at a standing health facility test site.

If you are experiencing symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath, before leaving your home, call your health care provider or the DPH Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866-408-1899 first to discuss whether you should be tested for coronavirus. Importantly, testing is NOT recommended for those who do not have symptoms.

There is no need to go to the emergency room, unless you are having significant difficulty breathing. Delaware's hospitals are prepared for coronavirus, but it is important to preserve resources for those that truly need them and avoid unnecessarily exposing vulnerable people to the virus. If you have a medical emergency, call 911 and make sure to let the dispatcher know what symptoms you are experiencing.

> "Effective response takes all of us working together. Our hospitals and the Division of Public Health will continue in close collaboration through this event," said **Wayne Smith, President & CEO of the Delaware Healthcare Association**. "Delawareans also have a critical role to play in keeping our health care providers safe: if you suspect you have been exposed to coronavirus, stop and call your health care provider first. It is vitally important that you do not go directly to your doctor's office or the Emergency Room to protect the health of health care providers and vulnerable populations."

There have been 38 total laboratory-confirmed cases in the state since March 11. This includes eight additional cases since yesterday. Of the Delawareans diagnosed with COVID-19, 27 are from New Castle County, five are from Kent County, and six are from Sussex County. Additional aggregate demographic information will be provided as part of the Division of Public Health's daily update.

If you think you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or have symptoms of illness, stay home and make sure to distance yourself from vulnerable populations. This includes people 60 years of age and older; people with serious chronic health conditions such as diabetes, lung disease, or heart disease; or those who are immunocompromised. Many individuals infected with COVID-19 recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids and taking pain and fever-reducing medications. However, illness can be severe and require hospitalization in some cases.

Delawareans with general questions about COVID-19 or their exposure risk can call the Division of Public Health's Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866-408-1899, or 711 for individuals who are hearing-impaired, from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Questions can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov (mailto: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 (http://de.gov/coronavirus).

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(https://news.delaware.gov/2020/03/20/governor-carney-dhss-announce-statewide-covid-19-testing-plan-in-coordination-with-delaware-health-care-systems/?print=pdf)

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