

Governor Carney Announces Significant Expansion of Statewide Testing Program for COVID-19

In cooperation with partners, Delaware will have capacity to test 80,000 Delawareans each month

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Friday announced a significant [expansion](#) of Delaware’s statewide testing program for COVID-19 as Delaware moves toward Phase I of an economic reopening. The plan will be implemented in partnership with Delaware’s hospital systems, primary care physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and community organizations statewide.

The new testing program will allow the State of Delaware to conduct 80,000 tests monthly – more than four times the current level of testing statewide. Delaware’s plan is based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

For current data on COVID-19 testing in Delaware, visit de.gov/healthycommunity.

*“We know that widespread community testing needs to be in place before we can safely reopen our economy,” said **Governor Carney**. “Finding a reliable supply of reliable tests has been a serious challenge, but we’ve put a plan in place that gets us to the starting line. We’ll be able to diagnose symptomatic Delawareans and detect asymptomatic spread*

through community testing. I want to thank all of our partners who are stepping up for their fellow Delawareans during this crisis.”

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 start arriving in Delaware today.

Curative, which has received an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for its test, was referred to state officials by New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer.

“Mass testing is a critical component to understand, identify, and defeat this invisible enemy,” said **Matt Meyer, County Executive, New Castle County**. “These new, innovative tests will allow us to increase testing capacity in our communities and Governor Carney, and his team deserve credit for their leadership and collaboration to help us persevere through this pandemic.”

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

- Any symptomatic individual.
- Anyone with known exposure to COVID-19.
- Vulnerable Delaware populations, including elderly Delawareans and members of low-income communities.
- Certain front-line essential workers

“Black and Hispanic communities in our state are experiencing disproportionate rates of coronavirus infection,” said **Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and a practicing family physician**. “Increased and targeted community testing by our health care partners will help us identify asymptomatic spread, isolate individuals who are positive for COVID-19 and, ultimately, slow the transmission.

"Governor Carney and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) [announced on Tuesday](#) the launch of a universal COVID-19 testing program for staff and residents in long-term care facilities statewide. Public health experts at DPH also will develop a list of front-line workers who will receive prioritized testing and will work with employers to develop employee testing programs.

The Delaware Emergency Management Agency, led by Director A.J. Schall, will work with Delaware's hospital systems and other health care partners to operationalize the testing framework and stabilize the supply chain.

Under the new testing program announced on Friday, Delaware plans to supply partner organizations with testing supplies to more effectively reach Delawareans where they need and can easily access tests. Delaware's list of partners includes primary care physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, pharmacies, and long-term care facilities.

"Our partners in this statewide testing effort will help us quickly identify Delawareans who need COVID-19 testing and prevent the spread of the disease," said **Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of the Delaware Division of Public Health**. "This new testing program is a significant expansion of our current testing efforts, and it's designed to keep all Delawareans safe and healthy by helping us to understand where and how much viral activity is occurring in our state. Thank you to our partners who are helping us take this important step forward."

“Federally Qualified Health Centers, like Westside Family Healthcare, are key in reaching vulnerable populations hard hit by the virus in both urban and rural areas,” said **Lolita Lopez, President and CEO of Westside Family Healthcare**, a Federally Qualified Health Center with offices in Wilmington, Newark, Bear and Dover. “As a trusted community health provider, we remain committed to partnering with Delaware state agencies, hospitals, and other primary care clinicians to provide critical outreach and COVID19 testing in the communities we serve every day.”

The State of Delaware also will continue to work with hospitals and county administrators to stand up rotating locations of community testing sites statewide. Hospital systems will continue to administer tests both on site and in the community.

“Adequate testing is an essential component in an evidence-based strategy to reopen our state while keeping the people in our community safe,” said **Janice E. Nevin, M.D., MPH, president and CEO of ChristianaCare**. “Since we conducted Delaware’s first drive-through testing event on March 14, ChristianaCare has partnered with Governor Carney and the health care systems across the state to expand testing capacity while providing care to those who need it, in the hospital and in the community. This new, expanded testing is an important step forward for our community.”

“Bayhealth has lead efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to safely screen, test and treat people in our central and southern Delaware communities,” said **Terry Murphy, President and CEO of Bayhealth**. “I am very proud of all the Bayhealth team members who have worked tirelessly in the hospital, in

the field and behind the scenes to provide vital COVID-19 screening and testing. As our local businesses begin re-opening, Bayhealth remains committed to supporting Governor Carney's plan to expand statewide testing in the communities we are privileged to serve."

"Beebe Healthcare remains a committed partner of Governor Carney in continuing to expand COVID-19 testing capability in order to better understand the extent of novel coronavirus infection in our community," said **Dr. David Tam, President and CEO of Beebe Healthcare**. "Having led the effort to operationalize the State's plan for community-based testing in Georgetown, we stand ready to meet the continued needs of our community. Beebe is providing safe and effective COVID-19 treatment, both in the ambulatory and the inpatient setting, and expanding access to testing will mean more answers, and more opportunities to educate, guide and reassure our community in Sussex County."

"For ninety-five years, Saint Francis has stood ready to serve Delawareans, and we are enthusiastically embracing the chance to support community testing efforts," said **Daniel J. Sinnott, President and CEO of Saint Francis Healthcare**. "We look forward to partnering with Governor Carney and our healthcare partners across the state to increase the safety of all residents."

"Having supported the large testing requirements in Sussex County, launching a partnership with New Castle County for testing of paramedics, and offering drive thru testing sites across the state, Nemours is committed to this continued collaboration with Governor John Carney and the Delaware Division of Public Health that supports the recovery phase of

this pandemic,” said **Jay Greenspan, Chief Executive Officer of Nemours/duPont Hospital for Children.**

“Part of the VA’s fourth mission is to assist in times of crisis,” said **Vince Kane, Director of the Wilmington VA Center for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.** “We are honored to stand with Delaware our Delaware Healthcare Association partners to help our community fight COVID-19.”

“Testing is an important step on the road to economic reopening,” said **Wayne A. Smith, President & CEO of the Delaware Healthcare Association.** “Hospitals are working closely with our state partners in the planning and execution of testing as more resources become available to test the general population. This is a big lift and requires the close collaboration that has been present since the start of our testing efforts.”

Delaware’s new testing strategy will be implemented alongside a robust contact tracing program to isolate infected individuals and their close contacts. Details of Delaware’s contact training program will be released early next week and will include details on hiring a dedicated workforce to help Delawareans who are positive with COVID-19 to safely self-isolate.

Anyone with a question about COVID-19, whether related to medical or social service needs, should call Delaware 2-1-1; 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.

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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