



California COVID-19 Testing Task Force Newsletter

May 8, 2020

The Testing Task Force was officially launched on April 4, with the mission of coordinating public and private sector efforts to significantly increase access to testing across California. The Task Force is co-chaired by Charity Dean, M.D., Assistant Director of the California Department of Public Health and Paul Markovich, CEO of Blue Shield of California and has been working toward the following goals:

- Working to increase California lab capacity to rapidly turn around test results and increase capacity strategically to meet demand;
- Improving the supply chain so that that California can both collect samples and evaluate results without delay;
- Enabling new, high-quality tests to launch in California as soon as possible;
- Improving our ability to accurately track and evaluate COVID-19 testing capacity, results and reporting; and
- Building the workforce necessary to meet our testing goals.

Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance

Last week, the California Department of Public Health updated guidance for testing again, paving the way for some of the most progressive testing standards in the country. The tiers are broken out below and are linked on both the [California Department of Public Health](#) and Testing Task Force website.

Tier 1: Testing Modality - PCR with or without Serology

- Hospitalized patients
- Symptomatic and asymptomatic healthcare workers, first responders, and other social service employees
- Symptomatic and asymptomatic persons >65 years of age OR any age with chronic medical conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID 19 illness
- Persons identified for testing by public health contact investigations and disease control activities in high risk settings
- Screening of asymptomatic residents or employees of congregate living facilities including:
 - After positive cases have been identified in a facility
 - Prior to resident admission or re-admission to a facility
- Symptomatic and asymptomatic persons in essential occupations
 - E.g., utility workers, grocery store workers, food supply workers, other public employees
- Lower risk symptomatic persons

Tier 2: Testing Modality - PCR with or without Serology

- Lower risk asymptomatic persons

Community Surveillance

Test Modality: PCR or Serology

- Surveillance testing of asymptomatic persons as part of community or regional surveillance programs.

New Map Tool Announced

On Wednesday, a new testing website was launched to help Californians have better visibility into testing sites in their area. The new, interactive site allows Californians to quickly search for testing sites by current location, address, city or zip code and schedule an appointment. The announcement and link to the map can be found on the [CDPH website](#).

Testing Sites Updates

Since our last update [announcing](#) that the Testing Task Force would be working with OptumServe to stand up 80 testing sites across California, we're pleased to announce that 70 of those sites are now operational. The Testing Task Force is working with county leaders throughout the state to identify appropriate testing sites by prioritizing locations based upon areas of greatest need. County leaders are responsible for identifying the specific testing site locations with recommendations from the Testing Task Force on zip codes that should be targeted. The counties where sites are being stood up were chosen on the following criteria:

- Number of cases in a county
- Income (with a preference for lower incomes)
- Diversity of population (with a preference for more diverse communities)
- Percent of population in high risk groups (>65 years old or with existing health conditions)
- Existing access to testing (both time to reach a testing site and total population)

Appointments can be made by visiting <https://lhi.care/covidtesting>. Phone registration can also be used for people without internet access: 888-634-1123.

A huge thank you for the leadership of local county public health departments to get these sites stood up and operational, working to serve their communities.

Testing Options - Serology

There has been a great deal of media coverage in recent weeks around antibody or serology testing, which looks for the presence of antibodies, also known as specific proteins made in response to infections. Antibodies can be found in the blood of people who are tested after infection and show that people have had an immune response to the infection. Antibody test results are especially important for detecting previous infections with few or no symptoms.

While there is still a lot to learn about antibody testing and COVID-19, the Testing Task Force put out additional guidance this week, which can be found on our website [here](#).



New COVID-19 Lab Resources

This week, the Testing Task Force announced a new Lab Testing Metrics Application for labs to submit data to the state. This will replace daily manual reporting and will help to inventory supplies to better address supply constraints. This does not replace any reporting obligations to the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE), a secure system that the California Department of Public Health has implemented for electronic disease reporting and surveillance. The App will be rolled out in phases to ensure labs have adequate training and support during the transition.

Please feel free to distribute this information through your own communication channels and as a reminder, you can always visit the [Testing Task Force](#) for additional resources.

For specific questions, please reach out to testing.taskforce@state.ca.gov and a representative will respond to you.