



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Health Announces Rapid Antigen Test Card Distributions Across the Commonwealth

Harrisburg, PA – The Wolf Administration today began distributing the first allotment of 250,000 COVID-19 antigen test kits provided by the federal government to Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA)-certified institutions across Pennsylvania. Distribution is starting with Bradford, Centre, Lebanon, Montour, Northumberland, Schuylkill and Snyder counties because of the recent high disease incidence rate in these areas.

“Antigen test cards are a timely, quick and easy-to-use tool for communities to receive rapid COVID-19 testing,” Dr. Levine said. “These test kits, provided by the federal government and being distributed to areas in need by the Wolf Administration, will further help communities struggling with the spread of COVID-19. Antigen tests look for pieces of proteins that make up the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the virus that causes COVID-19, and are another tool in our testing toolkit to help quickly identify cases.”

The antigen test detects an antigen on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus while the Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test detects viral RNA. Both PCR and antigen tests can detect active infection and are considered diagnostic. Antigen tests can be considered for symptomatic individuals (within the first five to seven days of symptom onset depending upon the test) in settings where there is a high probability that the individual or population to be tested is positive.

The department anticipates receiving hundreds of thousands of tests over a number of weeks from the federal government. We will then be providing those kits to counties in need. These test kits are separate from and in addition to the ones being provided by the federal government directly to skilled nursing facilities, personal care homes and historically black colleges and universities.

CLIA-certified sites currently include:

- Long-Term Care Facilities;

- Personal care homes and Assisted Living/Intermediate Care facilities;
- Higher-education institutions;
- Drug and Alcohol and Behavioral Health treatment centers;
- State and county correctional facilities;
- Healthcare providers:
 - Federally Qualified Health Centers;
 - Urgent Care Centers;
 - Pharmacies; and
 - Primary Care doctors.

The targeted populations will be tested at CLIA-certified sites that directly receive these test kits and can provide timely test results and health care advice to individuals being tested.

Targeted populations include:

- Individuals in congregate care settings;
- Day care workers or clients;
- K-12 students and adults who work in K-12 settings;
- College and university students;
- Individuals without permanent housing;
- Food distribution facility employees;
- Food workers, and
- First responders.

Today the Secretary of Health also issued an [Order](#) to laboratories, health care practitioners, health care providers and facilities reinforcing that all antigen test results, both positive and negative, are required to be reported to the Department of Health via its reporting system, PA-NEDSS.

A patient with a positive antigen test result is considered a case and receives a complete case investigation and contact tracing. All entities conducting testing to identify SARS-CoV-2 are required by law to report positive, inconclusive/indeterminate, and negative results to PA-NEDSS within 24 hours. All laboratory reporters must request a PA-NEDSS account if they do not already have one.

For more information about COVID-19 testing and testing locations visit www.health.pa.gov.

MEDIA CONTACT: Nate Wardle, ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov