

News Release

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ADHS, DEMA, and HHS Announce Details On COVID-19 Testing Strike Force

Testing Sites Will Provide Up To 5,000 Free Diagnostic Tests Per Day to Underserved Communities

PHOENIX — The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA) announced details of a new partnership today with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide additional diagnostic testing in Arizona, with a focus on Maryvale and South Phoenix. The federal strike team, working with ADHS, DEMA, and Phoenix Incident Command on logistics, will launch two testing sites that will provide free diagnostic testing for COVID-19 in these high-need, underserved communities.

The testing will begin on Friday, July 17, and continue for twelve days at South Mountain Park, 10919 S. Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85042, and Maryvale High School, 3415 N 59th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85033. Information on pre-registration for the testing sites will be available at azhealth.gov/SurgeTesting. To ensure an appointment and reduce wait times, participants are encouraged to pre-register.

Through this partnership, HHS has committed up to 5,000 tests per day – 2,500 at each site – to serve up to 60,000 Arizonans. This test involves a self-administered nasal swab in a drive-thru stall. Those tested will receive five cloth face coverings. Results will be available within 24-48 hours from the time specimens arrive at the lab. The tested individual will receive the results through an online portal.

“This rapid surge in testing will have an immediate impact in containing COVID-19 and help us to increase testing in communities where it’s needed most,” said Governor Ducey. “My thanks to our federal partners and their continued partnership and for continuing to step up to aid public health in Arizona.”

“Increased community testing is a critical public health tool to help us reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Arizona,” said Dr. Cara Christ, ADHS director. “Over the last several months we have been working with partners across the state to increase COVID-19 testing. The high volume, rapid testing that our federal partners can provide will help increase testing to underserved areas of the state. We appreciate the help from our federal, state, and local partners to increase access to testing.”

“I’m proud to partner with local incident commands to get them the federal resources they need to conduct necessary testing,” said Maj. Gen. Michael T. McGuire, Arizona Director of Emergency and Military Affairs. “Flattening this curve requires a whole-of-community approach, and we will support Phoenix incident commands just as we did with the Navajo Nation.”

The new partnership will further increase the number of people who are getting a diagnostic COVID-19 test. Since April, PCR diagnostic testing has increased nearly 570% from 52,866 tests in April to 367,992 tests in June. There have been 54,578 PCR tests reported in the first week of July.

Arizonans can take the following precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wear a mask every time you are in public, even if you do not feel sick.
- Physically distance by staying at least six feet away from others who are not in your household when you are in public.
 - Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Arizonans at higher risk for severe illness should continue to stay at home and avoid crowded public spaces. People at higher risk for severe illness include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) and immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Healthcare providers are offering testing at over 300 testing locations statewide. People are encouraged to follow the instructions on the testing website as many of the healthcare providers require individuals to pre-register for testing and may have other requirements to get tested. Testing locations along with appointment times and registration links can be found online at azhealth.gov/testing