



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2020

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

Harrisburg, PA – The Wolf Administration today began distribution of the second allotment of COVID-19 antigen test kits provided by the federal government to Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA)-certified institutions in Berks, Huntingdon, Union and Westmoreland counties.

“Antigen test cards are a timely, quick and easy-to-use tool for communities to receive rapid COVID-19 testing,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel 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 and are less sensitive than PCR tests for detecting COVID-19 infections.”

Last week 70,840 tests were distributed to 55 [facilities](#) in Bradford, Centre, Lebanon, Montour, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Snyder counties. Additional tests will be provided to healthcare providers in those counties in the coming weeks.

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) and in asymptomatic individuals in settings where there is a high probability that the individual to be tested is positive, such as when they are a close contact of a case.

On October 15, the Secretary of Health issued an [Order](#) to 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. 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, the virus that causes COVID-19, are required by law to report positive, inconclusive/indeterminate, and negative results to the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (PA-NEDSS) within 24 hours. All laboratory reporters must request a PA-NEDSS account if they do not already have one.

The department anticipates receiving hundreds of thousands of tests over a number of weeks from the federal government. We will then be providing kits to counties in need.

CLIA-certified sites include:

- All long-term 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 during their visit.

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.

For more information about the CLIA certificate and antigen test card reporting, reference the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA) [Health Advisory Network \(HAN\) Advisory: Guidance for Reporting Point of Care SARS-CoV-2 Test Results](#).

For more information about the antigen tests, reference the [PA HAN Advisory: Point of Care Antigen Test Use and Interpretation](#).

For the latest information for individuals, families, businesses and schools, visit “Responding to COVID-19” on pa.gov.