



Maryland K-12 COVID-19 Testing Program

Background: In support of Governor Hogan’s commitment to supporting schools returning to in-person instruction across Maryland, the COVID-19 Testing Task Force, Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) have developed a program to provide free COVID-19 tests for both public and non-public schools. This will serve as an additional tool to support schools that are open, or plan to reopen, for in-person learning in March 2021 for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

State’s Support: The state will provide both rapid antigen point-of-care (POC) and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing supplies proportional to the number of students and staff returning for in-person learning, based on the anticipated number of students and staff that may need testing, using guidance from MDH. This is a voluntary program.

The program will provide schools with the necessary tools and information to implement both rapid POC tests and PCR test specimen collections in schools with the goal of testing, at a minimum, symptomatic students and staff, as well as asymptomatic students and staff with confirmed COVID-19 exposure. This program can stand alone as a school's testing regimen, or can enhance an existing testing effort they have implemented.

There are approximately 1.1M students and staff in Maryland schools (public and non-public) in almost 3,000 schools. The program anticipates distributing roughly 1,000,000 rapid POC and PCR tests.

Distribution: The state is prepared to distribute testing supplies to schools through various channels which may include distributing through larger school systems, shipping to a location within close proximity of the schools, or other delivery options. The state's plan will be flexible, to provide testing supplies to all schools who participate in this program.

Technical Assistance: Schools will be encouraged to continue to seek Technical Assistance from their local health department or existing contacts within MDH. The Testing Task Force and the MDH Office of Population Health Improvement (OPHI) will continue to host the “Community of Learning” that we established late last year to provide a forum for schools to discuss testing

with MDH and each other. Training on administering rapid POC tests is being coordinated by the state and will be available to all participating schools. The Testing Task Force has created a monitored email account (MDH.K12Testing@Maryland.gov) to receive questions, concerns, and suggestions from participating schools.