



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Health, Community Groups Roll Out COVID-19 Mobile Response Unit to Provide Testing and Education to Underserved Communities

Harrisburg, PA – Pennsylvania Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine today announced a unique partnership with Latino Connection, Highmark Blue Shield and the Independence Blue Cross Foundation to create the first-in-the-nation COVID-19 Mobile Response Unit to provide testing and education targeting minority and underserved communities throughout Pennsylvania.

“We share a unified purpose of building healthy communities through access to care and education to create a healthy Pennsylvania for all,” Dr. Levine said. “This partnership will help ensure Pennsylvanians, no matter where they live or what language they speak, will have access to COVID-19 testing. It also furthers the Wolf Administration’s commitment to creating pathways to health equity for anyone living in the commonwealth.”

In total, this testing effort costed \$498,000. The department Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity Enhancing Detection fund contributed a \$331,000 grant. In addition, specimens will be collected and taken to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Laboratories for testing after each event.

Known as CATE, Community-Accessible Testing & Education, the unit is equipped to conduct COVID-19 testing on-site through a mobile RV vehicle while also educating the public on how to stay healthy and safe. The mobile response unit’s tagline is “Sharing knowledge to erase fear,” which it intends to do through widespread community healthcare and health education offered with no insurance required.

“I am thrilled and humbled for Latino Connection to play a role in this critically important initiative,” George Fernandez, Founder and CEO of Latino Connection said. “With almost 30 tour stops already on the schedule, CATE will be accessible to people in nearly every region across Pennsylvania. Any organization that wishes to request a stop in its community may complete a [contact form](#) on the website to do so.”

CATE will be making tour stops in the following counties:

- Adams
- Allegheny
- Chester
- Berks
- Bucks
- Delaware
- Erie
- Lancaster
- Lebanon
- Lehigh
- Luzerne
- Monroe
- Montgomery
- Northampton
- Philadelphia
- York

Those interested in visiting CATE can find the tour stop schedule listed on the website at www.CATEmobileunit.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CATEmobileunit. Services are available on a first come, first serve basis. Social distancing and masking guidelines will be followed at all times. While each tour stop provider's policies are different, most providers, if not short on testing supplies, will test anyone who believes they've been exposed to COVID. Other providers may only test those who are experiencing symptoms. Questions about specific CATE stops can be directed to info@catemobileunit.com.

"We at Highmark are delighted to be teaming up with the commonwealth, Latino Connection and Independence Blue Cross in supporting this important service to help fight COVID-19. During this time of uncertainty, we feel this is an excellent use of our resources," Daniel Onorato, executive vice president, chief corporate affairs officer for Highmark Health said. "We ultimately hope to touch thousands of residents through this effort."

"We're very excited to work with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Latino Connection to address the need for increased COVID-19 testing in underserved communities throughout our region," President of the Independence Blue Cross Foundation Lorina Marshall-Blake said. "Education and testing are essential to ending the devastation of this pandemic in our communities, particularly among minorities and communities of color who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19."

For more information about COVID-19 testing near you, visit the Department of Health's website, www.health.pa.gov.

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