



## **Department of Health Expands COVID-19 Testing Sites Through Faith-Based Partnerships**

**October 26, 2020**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Commonwealth Director of Testing and Contact Tracing of Health Michael Huff today announced that COVID-19 testing sites have been launched in Dauphin county communities in faith-based settings.

“Research shows that geographically, low-income areas, including Pennsylvanian communities of Black or African American, Hispanic and/or Spanish-speaking minorities, have been disproportionately affected with higher rates of COVID-19,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “We know that appropriate testing, along with other public health interventions such as social distancing, wearing face masks, avoiding group gatherings and practicing hand washing can help communities mitigate transmission of COVID-19. In seeking to address the racial disparities of COVID-19 transmission, the department is looking to partner with important community-based organizations, such as faith-based organizations, to support and provide testing. We encourage health providers to follow our lead in partnering with faith-based organizations to create testing sites at faith-based settings in impacted communities.”

The Department of Health has established relationships with faith-based organizations in both Dauphin and Allegheny counties that are ready to collaborate with providers, received education on an existing evidence-based model utilized by a neighboring state and provider, and is working to identify locations where there may be a need for accessible testing.

The department began reaching out to certain hospitals, health systems and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to determine if they would consider partnering with local faith-based organizations to establish a temporary testing site that may include:

- Education;
- Diagnostic testing; and
- Referrals and connection to health care providers.

Interested churches, faith-based or health provider organizations may reach out to the [Department of Health Office of Health Equity](#) to hold a testing event.

The Hamilton Health Center will administer the tests for all of the faith-based organizations in Dauphin County. Additional health providers will administer tests in Allegheny County.

A full list of faith-based testing events in Dauphin and Allegheny counties can be found on the Department of Health’s [website](#). Testing events will occur outdoors where participants may drive through or walk up to receive free testing. Registration will be completed on-site and insurance is not required. Participants should bring a photo-ID. On average, the turnaround time to receive results will be three to four days after testing.

The original press release on the faith-based testing initiative can be found [here](#).

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