



**DOUGLAS COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 17, 2020**

## **PILOT DRIVE THROUGH TEST EFFORT COLLECTS 17 SAMPLES FOR COVID-19 IN DOUGLAS COUNTY**

**Joint Release from Douglas County Board of Commissioners and Douglas Public Health Network**

(Douglas County, Ore.) – Your Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas County Public Health Official, Dr. Robert Dannenhoffer, officials from Douglas Public Health Network (DPHN), Douglas County Emergency Management, Aviva Health, Mercy Medical Center, Evergreen Family Medicine and Umpqua Health Alliance are working hard to cooperatively provide accurate and timely COVID-19 information and response to Douglas County residents.

On Tuesday, March 17, 2020 Douglas Public Health Network conducted a pilot testing drive through procedure for potential COVID-19 patients in Douglas County. Residents that were tested were identified by their health care provider, as a patient that was symptomatic, and needed to be tested. This was the first time such drive through testing for COVID-19 was done in Douglas County. Up until now tests were collected sporadically at clinics and sent to the Oregon State Public Health lab and then the CDC. DPHN modeled the pilot after 3 years of successful flu-vaccine clinics.

Local medical leaders, including Dr. Dannenhoffer and Dr. Jason Gray, Chief Medical Officer at Mercy Medical Center performed the actual tests on Tuesday.

“Testing is the best way for us to attempt to control the spread of the Coronavirus,” said Douglas County Public Health Officer Bob Dannenhoffer. “When we can determine the number of positive cases in the community, where they have gone, and who they have come in contact with, we can also notify people who may had contact with them and recommend they quarantine themselves.”

The pilot testing was done at the Douglas County Fairgrounds utilizing a drive through process and local health care providers. Completed tests have been sent to Quest, a commercial laboratory for processing. The results of the tests should be known in two to four days. Test results will be sent from the laboratory back to the health care provider that ordered the test.

The drive through process allows for multiple people to be seen in a manner that is safe for the patient and the provider. Doing several tests consecutively also helps to conserve valuable high-tech masks, which providers need to wear and are in short supply nationwide. Such protective equipment is likely to be short supply during this pandemic. Most of the protective equipment used in hospitals is disposable and is single use only. The drive-thru clinic allowed the use of powered personal respirators that could be used for multiple patients while providing maximal protection for the health care providers doing the tests.

“The pilot was a success,” said Tim Freeman Douglas County Commissioner. “We are one of the first places in the state to increase availability and accessibility of testing while also preserving patient confidentiality and public safety. The amount of cooperation and professionalism that we have in Douglas County allowed this pilot to be successful. We are among the leaders in the state and nation in solving the testing issue.”

The pilot drive through testing clinic saw 17 residents. All were referred by their physician. The pilot allowed DPHN to work out kinks in the process and identify how to conduct a larger drive through COVID-19 testing clinic in the future.

“This pilot clinic allowed us to test our flow and process. The process was smooth and we were able to move patients through in three or four minutes per patient. This will allow us to scale up, allowing for much greater testing in the future” said Teresa Mutschler, Executive Director of DPHN.

DPFN is working with local health and medical partners and plans to expand the drive through testing, which would increase testing availability for residents in Douglas County. A specific date for the next drive through COVID-19 testing clinic has not been determined.

“This is a serious time in our community, and I was honored to work among my colleagues in this pilot drive through testing process,” said Jason Gray, Chief Medical Officer at Mercy Medical Center. “We are all committed to responding to the threat of COVID-19 and working side by side with our partners to make this innovative effort work for our citizens.”

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