

Critical information regarding future lab testing availability & discontinuation of funding

February 7, 2022

Dear Long-Term Care Facility,

This letter is a follow-up to the one you received from KDHE dated December 17, 2021. We are reaching out today regarding the previously announced extension of COVID-19 testing support via KDHE-supported contract laboratories during the transition to onboarding your facility with the Battelle Midwest Coordination Center for routine testing or arranging other testing options. As a reminder, KDHE-funded contract laboratory testing for COVID-19 will be available to you through **March 31, 2022**, at which point it will be discontinued and your facility will be expected to have an alternative testing solution in place that is not funded by the state.

As a reminder, CMS issued updated COVID-19 staff testing requirements on September 10, 2021. Based on the latest guidance, routine testing of unvaccinated staff should be based on the extent of the virus in the community. Facilities should use their community transmission level, which can be found at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>, as the trigger for staff testing frequency.

Table: Routine Testing Intervals by County COVID-19 Level of Community Transmission

Level of COVID-19 Community Transmission	Minimum Testing Frequency of Unvaccinated Staff⁺
Low (blue)	Not recommended
Moderate (yellow)	Once a week
Substantial (orange)	Twice a week
High (red)	Twice a week

⁺Vaccinated staff do not need to be routinely tested.

Options for Continued COVID-19 Testing Support After March 31

After March 31, options available to LTCFs for diagnostic and surveillance testing include:

1. Work with the Battelle Midwest Coordination Center to access free surveillance testing for your facility.
2. Work with your existing laboratory or testing partner to include insurance billing, and LTCFs to bill insurance, wherever possible, for samples collected at your facility.
3. Use point of care antigen tests available to your facility through federal CMS programs or purchasing antigen tests if you are not able to get them from CMS.

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Janet Stanek, Acting Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

Please note that KDHE will continue to work with LTCFs to provide testing through the state lab in response to COVID-19 outbreaks that occur in the facility.

Battelle Program Onboarding Deadline

Battelle Midwest Coordination Center provides free surveillance PCR testing using pooled saliva samples for organizations serving underserved populations, including congregate living facilities. KDHE is working with Battelle to monitor the status of facilities as they onboard to make sure they are making progress towards the transition. To date, only ~135 facilities are registered or actively testing with Battelle. We have identified many facilities that have not yet registered or have taken the initial registration steps to test with Battelle and have paused the onboarding process while testing with Kansas contract labs is still available.

Each LTCF onboarding to the Battelle Midwest Coordination Center's free testing services should expect a 4+ week onboarding period, on average. Given that time frame and the expiration of KDHE-supported contract laboratories on March 31, 2022, **we encourage all facilities interested in Battelle's free surveillance testing support to begin the registration process as soon as possible and complete the steps to have your facility fully onboarded no later than March 15, 2022.**

Once you are onboarded and ready to test using the Battelle program, you do not need to discontinue testing with the state contracted labs prior to March 31, 2022. You may choose one of three options:

1. Continue using the contract labs for all your testing through March 31, 2022.
2. Use a hybrid testing model that includes testing with both Battelle and the state contract labs.
3. Transition surveillance testing entirely to Battelle.

Please visit <https://testedandprotected.org/#/> or contact slaughterm@testedandprotected.org to learn more or to start the onboarding process with Battelle.

We truly appreciate everything you have done to keep Kansans at highest risk for serious COVID-19 illness safe during the pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Stanek".

Janet Stanek
Acting Secretary