

Kansas COVID-19 Unified Testing Strategy For Long-Term Care Facilities

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 Unified Testing Strategy for Kansas is designed to increase testing in Kansas as well as to coordinate the public and private sector testing. The overall goal is to double the amount of testing by the end of 2020.

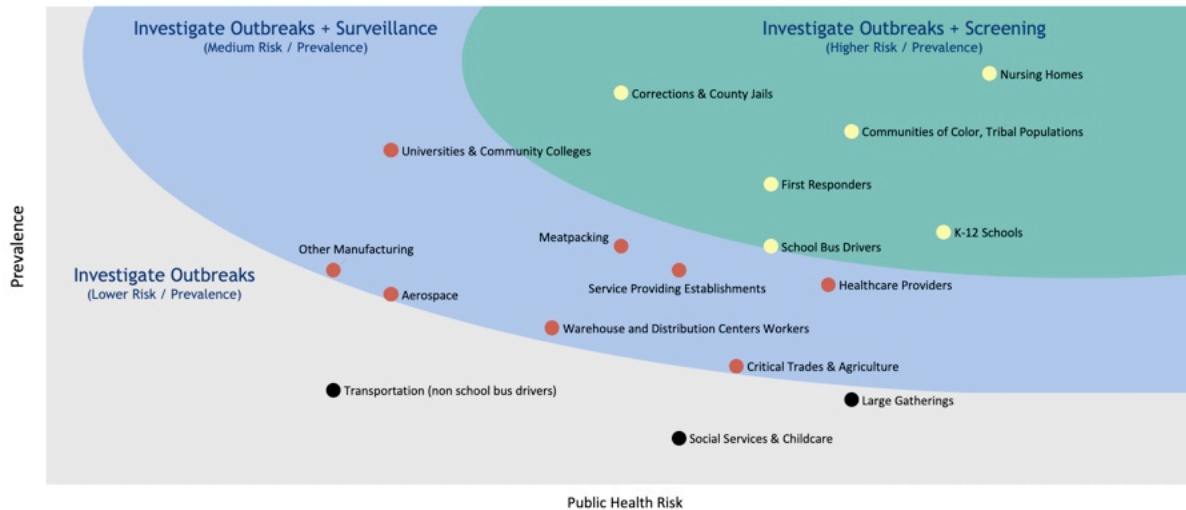
The state of Kansas is at a critical juncture with SARS-CoV-2, otherwise known as COVID-19. Kansas communities are continuing to experience a significant amount of cases. This impacts not only individuals and their families, but businesses, workforces and the Kansas economy. Until a vaccine is widely available, the most important strategy to protect Kansans and ensure a promising economy is to increase testing, in coordination with other measures such as isolating those who are sick, identifying those who have been in close contact and communicating the importance of prevention activities.

LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Long-Term Care Facilities play an important role in this testing strategy moving forward. Your involvement is critical for the state and for Kansans. A summary of the plan follows on page 2. In the coming weeks, the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) will be in contact with long-term care facilities with resources and next steps. Scott Brunner, the Deputy Secretary for Hospitals and Facilities for KDADS, will serve as the point-person coordinating testing efforts in the long-term care community. He can be reached at scott.brunner@ks.gov

TESTING STRATEGY

The COVID-19 Unified Testing Strategy coordinates both public and private COVID-19 testing efforts across Kansas, based on public health risk for the virus and the prevalence of the virus in a given population. The below graph demonstrates how the strategy will operate. An expanded strategy will allow for broader routine screening to stop community spread of the virus, such as in schools and nursing homes, and will ensure coordination between public and private testing efforts.



For those populations at the highest risk identified in the green band, state and local public health will continue to investigate outbreaks, but also **screen for the virus**, isolating those who test positive and quarantining those are close contacts. Screening will include Antigen and PCR testing collected via nasal swab and/or saliva, depending upon the test used. Screening is intended to identify infected individuals without, or prior to development of, symptoms who may be contagious so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission.

For those at medium risk in the blue band, state and local public health will also continue to investigate outbreaks, but also use **surveillance testing**. Surveillance testing is used to gain information at a population level, rather than an individual level. Surveillance testing will be conducted using pooled testing or wastewater testing.

- Pooled testing combines respiratory samples from several people and conducting one laboratory test on the combined pool of samples to detect COVID-19. This method allows for more samples to be tested with fewer materials used.
- Wastewater testing samples wastewater in a community to detect SARS-CoV-2. This serves as an early warning system for a virus' presence in a community.

With shared goals and clear metrics, this unified coordinated strategy will ensure Kansas can effectively test the population and identify where the virus exists.

PROTOCOLS TO COORDINATE WITH TESTING

In addition to testing, there are several things which need to be implemented to successfully reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our state. This includes isolating positive individuals, investigating positive cases, quarantining those exposed, and implementing prevention protocols.

- **ISOLATING.** When an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they instructed to isolate from others for up to 10 days, depending upon their symptoms. Because the person may be infectious during this time, it is essential for them to follow this. This is also essential for those who are asymptomatic to follow as well, as they still may be infectious despite not having symptoms. Further guidance and instructions can be found on [KDHE's COVID-19 website](#).

- **QUARANTINE.** Everyone who has been exposed to someone who tests positive is at risk of getting the virus. Public health seeks to locate those who have been close contacts of the infected person, and to advise those individuals to stay at home and away from others for two weeks. Since symptoms may take between 2-14 days after exposure to develop, it is essential for exposed individuals to stay at home away from others. This is referred to as quarantine.
- **CASE INVESTIGATION:** After a positive case is identified, public health contacts the individual to determine where the individual may have become infected.
- **OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION:** An outbreak is defined as two or more cases connected to one known exposure. When an outbreak occurs, public health works with the location to identify and test those potentially exposed and /or ill. Additional infection protocols will be implemented in congregate settings.
- **PREVENTION MEASURES:** Until a vaccine is widely available, the best way to avoid COVID-19 is through prevention measures. This includes things such as social distancing, wearing masks, staying home if ill and avoiding large groups. In congregate settings, this includes things such as wearing and using the appropriate PPE and infection protocols.

CONCLUSION

Increasing testing is paramount to our state's health and future. We will be sharing more information about the unified testing strategy and ways in which your organization can be involved. Thank you for your role in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Kansas.