

March 27, 2020

Steve Allender, Mayor
City of Rapid City
300 6th Street
Rapid City, SD 57701-2724

Dear Mayor Allender:

This is in response to your letter dated March 25, 2020, requesting information about COVID-19 testing at the State Public Health Laboratory (SPHL). The SPHL is CLIA approved and overseen by Dr. Timothy Southern.

COVID-19 test kits are provided to healthcare providers across the state based on provider request and availability of test kits. There is no allocation per county. Providers follow established protocols to determine who should receive a COVID-19 test. I would also encourage you to read the infographic on testing on COVID.SD.GOV: https://doh.sd.gov/documents/COVID19/COVID_TestingFacts.pdf

As you may know, we have experienced critical shortages in the reagents necessary to run the COVID-19 tests. The supply chain issue for COVID-19 testing is not limited to the SPHL. These shortages led to a suspension of testing capability at the State Public Health Laboratory last week for a very short time. Governor Noem's strong advocacy at the federal level has resulted in the state receiving needed supplies to test specimens for high-priority populations (e.g., hospitalized individuals, symptomatic healthcare workers/first responders, and individuals residing in communal living arrangements such as nursing homes and assisted living centers). The SPHL has been able to test all specimens for these high priority populations and none are pending. We are confident, given our supply, we will be able to continue testing high-priority populations for the next several weeks.

The SPHL is able to provide one-day turnaround results for tests run at the laboratory. In addition, the three health care systems, including Monument Health, have made arrangements to do testing internally or have contracted with commercial laboratories for testing of patients not in the high-priority populations. These laboratories provide results in 1-5 days.

You can always find the latest information on COVID-19 in South Dakota at COVID.SD.GOV. Numbers are updated daily. As of 3/27/20 there are 58 positive cases (21 recovered), 2387 negative tests and 20 tests pending. These results are from the SPHL and private laboratories. The SPHL has returned specimens from individuals not in the high-priority group to requesting laboratories that now have the capability to test. As Governor Noem indicated in one of the many press briefings on COVID-19, the remaining pending tests will be run at the SPHL with results posted no later than Monday, March 30th.

Concerning the action you are considering in Rapid City, Governor Noem's Executive Order provides a framework for action for individuals, businesses, and health care providers across the state to take needed steps to respond to COVID-19 in our state. Any action taken beyond the Executive Order should be informed by data, science, and facts consistent with the situation in your community.

Sincerely,



Kim Malsam-Rysdon
Secretary of Health