

New NCDHHS Toolkit to Help Community Organizations Host COVID-19 Testing Events

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) today released a Partner COVID-19 Testing Toolkit designed for organizations seeking to host community testing events. The comprehensive toolkit comes in response to widespread interest among North Carolina organizations such as community-based organizations, churches and nonprofits.

“Getting tested helps everyone: the person, their loved ones and their fellow North Carolinians. This new resource supports the important work so many community organizations are doing and will do to increase testing access,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, MD. “Testing is a central piece of our response to this pandemic, so we continue to work hand-in-hand with community organizations to help North Carolinians access testing and follow-up care.”

Community testing allows North Carolinians to stay informed about their health and help slow the spread of COVID-19. The Partner Toolkit offers guidance to organizations on practical considerations such as selecting accessible locations, securing supplies and personal protective equipment, working with medical partners and local health departments, and connecting individuals with appropriate support. The guidance includes information about options for support at the county, state and federal level.

”Like many states around the country, the COVID-19 pandemic hit African American and other marginalized populations in North Carolina hard, which was predictable for many of us who have worked to improve health equity and reverse health disparities trends. Toolkits like this will help to equip nonprofits and other community- and faith-based organizations with the resources needed to serve as effective partners working closely with historically marginalized communities to stop the spread of this potentially deadly coronavirus,” said Elaine Hart-Brothers, MD, MPH, retired physician from Duke Health and co-founder of the Community Health Coalition, a nonprofit CBO serving historically marginalized populations in Durham and surrounding counties.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, North Carolina has increased testing capacity statewide. In addition to coordinating overall testing capacity, NCDHHS has provided no-cost testing at community events in targeted communities that are at high-risk for exposure and serious illness. As of last week the Department had supported more than 11,000 no-cost tests performed at more than 250 community testing events, and announced its plan to [surge additional testing capacity](#) to seven counties starting in September.

NCDHHS recommends testing for anyone experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#), as well as for any asymptomatic individual who may have been exposed, especially people from historically marginalized communities. The Partner Toolkit includes key elements of the [COVID-19 Community Testing in Historically Marginalized Populations](#) guidance NCDHHS released in May, including information on offering culturally and linguistically competent services and helping medically underserved individuals access primary care.

The Partner COVID-19 Testing Toolkit is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Information about upcoming community testing events can be found on the [Community Testing Events](#) page of the NCDHHS COVID-19 website, and testing sites can be located via [Find My Testing Place](#).