



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

LISA J. PINO, M.A., J.D.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 9, 2020

Dear Colleague:

On Friday, October 9, Governor Cuomo announced that COVID-19 rapid result testing resources will be further made available statewide. Starting the week of October 12, the New York State Department of Health will deploy an initial 400,000 rapid result test kits free of charge to local health departments, hospitals, pharmacies, and other health care providers to help increase access in all corners of New York State to free COVID-19 tests that can be done within 15 minutes, and without having to send a specimen to a lab. Additional kits will be available in future weeks. These rapid tests include both Abbott BinaxNOW and Abbott ID NOW tests cards/machines and test kits.

This new distribution effort comes as part of the state's new Cluster Action Initiative to address COVID-19 hot spots. This science-based approach takes action to attack these clusters and prevent any further spread of the virus, including new rules and restrictions directly targeted to areas with the highest concentration of COVID cases and the surrounding communities. In order to further support the Cluster Action Initiative, as well as COVID-19 testing efforts and access to testing across New York State, NYS DOH will provide on a limited basis, point of care COVID-19 testing instruments and test kits to local health departments (LHDs), their partners, and health care providers who can demonstrate a plan for their equitable use. Both Abbott BinaxNOW and Abbott ID NOW tests cards/machines and test kits may be available to LHDs as supply permits. DOH will prioritize the distribution of testing kits to entities in areas seeing recent uptick in cases. The rapid tests can be used as directed by federal and state guidance, including to control new outbreaks, conduct surveillance testing, and other purposes including to assist schools in 'yellow zones' test students and staff as part of new requirements to monitor COVID-19 spread as part of the Cluster Action Initiative.

NYS DOH is particularly interested in supporting partnerships among LHDs, healthcare providers (i.e. FQHCs, clinics, community health centers, hospitals, and pharmacies), and schools in order to achieve the new requirements to monitor COVID-19 spread as part of the Governor's [Cluster Action Initiative](#).

Providers are reminded that all results must be reported promptly to NYS DOH and that appropriate NYS DOH lab approvals are needed to perform testing. Additionally, in accordance with Executive Order 202.59 all COVID-19 and influenza test results must be reported electronically and include information on race/ethnicity, occupation (including employer), and school attended, where applicable. Training on how to use

the Abbott BinaxNOW cards and the Abbott ID NOW machines will be made available. Abbott ID NOW machines can also be used to run Influenza A & B assays.

LHDs have been instructed to submit requests for these resources that include the name of their healthcare provider partners and a plan that emphasizes how these resources will be utilized, including to support school testing in “Yellow Zones,” and/or to equitably address gaps in testing. Plans must be submitted by Friday, October 16, 2020. LHDs may have the test kits sent directly to the partnering provider(s) by including appropriate information in their plans.

NYS DOH will also accept requests directly from health care providers and pharmacies who present a plan that supports the community and/or school and other testing priorities as outlined in this letter. Coordination and collaboration with LHDs is encouraged.

Please share this information with your membership and encourage them to be in touch with their local health departments and, if desired, present a plan on the use of these resources to NYSDOH at prevention@health.ny.gov . Providers who need assistance setting up an electronic account for results reporting should contact eclrs@health.ny.gov.

Thank you for your dedication to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard Zucker M.D." in a cursive style.

Howard A. Zucker, MD, JD
Commissioner of Health