

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
JOINT INFORMATION CENTER
Telephone (707) 441-5000



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For more information, contact:
JIC PIO
(707) 441-5000
covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us

COVID-19 Testing Site Continues to Ramp Up in Humboldt County

A COVID-19 community testing site is bringing a dramatic increase in testing capability to Humboldt County.

The new site is the first in the state to provide increased testing to California residents. The site was announced by the Governor's Office late last week and is already ramping up operations, getting ready to serve the entire community.

According to Nick Launius, Operations Section Chief for the Humboldt County Emergency Operations Center, the site was assembled in just two days and is equipped with three personnel and a security guard. Launius said in an eight hour workday, staff is able to administer 96 tests, about "12 people per hour," with the ability to increase that capacity if needed.

"We are lucky to get, especially in Humboldt County, a resource of this magnitude," Launius said.

Because the site is the first in the state to come online, Launius said there are still "some things to work out" to make all of the systems function smoothly. For instance, the company administering the test, OptumServe, is still working to launch a web-based appointment scheduling platform.

According to Humboldt County Health Officer Dr. Teresa Frankovich, this online platform will allow the public direct access to testing "without referral by a health care provider, which will improve access for local residents. We appreciate this much needed assistance from the Governor's Testing Task Force."

As the site works to become fully operational and ready for the public, staff are conducting COVID-19 testing of health care workers, first responders and high-risk groups, including skilled nursing facility staff and other congregate setting staff.

"We're using this period to test drive the process from specimen collection to result notification with some of our high-risk workers so that we can fine tune any pieces that may need tweaking. Our goal is to have robust testing for all symptomatic individuals in our county and the ability to screen even asymptomatic individuals to be able to follow this pandemic closely in our own community," Dr. Frankovich said.

As of Tuesday, April 28, the testing site is on track to have administered over 140 COVID-19

tests in just two days, showing promise that Humboldt County can meet one of [Gov. Newsom's six critical indicators](#), expanded testing, before reopening the economy.

Though no exact date has been announced, the COVID-19 Community Testing site is slated to open to the public in the coming weeks. And while staff has been "ahead of schedule" so far according to Launius, when it comes to getting this site operational, he encourages the community to be patient in the first few days of opening to the public.

"This is a new resource. It isn't something that has ever really been done before," Launius said. "If you are going to get a test and have to wait 20 minutes or so, that's a good day."

More information regarding the location of the testing site and how to make an appointment will be announced in the coming weeks.

For the most recent COVID-19 information, visit [cdc.gov](#), [cdph.ca.gov](#), or [humboldt.gov.org](#). Local information is available at [humboldt.gov.org](#) or during business hours by contacting covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us or calling 707-441-5000.

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