

COVID-19 COLLECTION TESTING SITE RESOURCE

City-Hospital Partnership Quickens Testing for Residents "A Guide for Setting Up a Testing Site"

The medical community knows health issues. Local government knows local issues. Together they can be a positive force for the people they serve.

The City of Tallahassee and Tallahassee Memorial Hospital teamed up to establish a drive-through mobile COVID-19 testing site as a way to safely and more quickly diagnose residents. It is in the parking lot of a former mall. The city recently purchased the property, which will be the future Police Headquarters.

GETTING STARTED

There is no single scenario or blueprint for how sites are created. The city can begin discussions with its local healthcare facility or vice versa. Mitigating the pressures on current health systems while helping your citizens receive the tests and care they need are the most important goals.

Agreements for services between the parties should cover what each can bring to the table as it relates to service, supplies and financial support.

SELECTING THE SITE

The site must be large enough to accommodate the necessary flow and number of residents being tested without cars spilling into the streets and adjacent properties. Possible sites include the parking lots of vacant malls, shopping centers and office buildings.

OPERATIONAL MATERIALS

Determine who will provide the materials for the testing site. The City of Tallahassee provided all onsite materials, except specialized medical equipment and computers/laptops. For TMH, it was essentially plug in and go.

The testing site needed:

- ▶ Electric service at two points: the telemedicine area and at registration.
- ▶ A portable WIFI system to connect medical providers with their technology.
- ▶ Fax machines and printers for patients who were using the onsite telemedicine services to obtain their physician orders to allow testing.
- ▶ Tents, tables and chairs for each patient stop area. (Possibly sandbags to hold tents and signs down.)



- ▶ Communication radios to enable medical, city and site staff to communicate from various locations on site.
- ▶ Freezers. (One for each company analyzing the tests.)
- ▶ Trash cans for medical hazard waste separated from non-hazardous waste.
- ▶ A secure area to store printers, fax machines, medical equipment, etc., overnight.
- ▶ Restrooms and hand washing stations.

ORGANIZING AND TESTING THE SITE

To develop the mobile site, TMH's medical team reviewed the entire testing process with city staff. They explained how those being tested would drive through the site, from point of entry to testing location and release. With that information, the city's public works staff developed the physical layout and transportation flow (see graphic).

It is important to test the site prior to opening. With medical staff, walk/drive through the site as if you are a patient to better understand the process and flow. Make modifications if necessary.

Start with a soft opening on the first day. For day one, make no citywide announcements, just direct people with doctor's orders to go to the site. It will enable you to address any unforeseen challenges when there are minimal patients. Then, on the second day, officially announce the testing site.

LAYOUT AND TRAFFIC CONTROL

Signage is critical, both directional and instructional. (Most will be determined when the layout is finalized and the site pre-tested.)

TMH included the following signs: "Do not get out of your car," "Pedestrian waiting area," "Registration," "Test lane 1, 2, etc." and "Honk horn if you have an emergency." (Expect people to drive up that may be an actual medical emergency.)

Be flexible. Have extra city staff onsite to adjust barricades, signage, assist with traffic, etc. Unexpected situations may occur.

Walk up traffic. Expect walk-up traffic. Predetermine how they should be isolated/separated from non-protected staff onsite and also so they are safe from car traffic.

Consider the media. A designated media (public) area must be established away from incoming and exiting patients.

THE TESTING PROCESS

Residents with proper documentation. If a doctor's orders are in hand, resident will go directly to registration then to testing. This can be completed within five minutes.

Residents without proper documentation. Predetermine what to do if a resident doesn't have doctor's orders. (Do you reject them from the site or provide another option?)

TMH provided a "relief lane" that allowed residents to use telemedicine services to ask their doctor for the order. While the patient is waiting for the doctor's order to arrive, you can either provide an escape route so that the patient can return when they receive the doctor's order or have an onsite parking area where they can wait. At this site it took about 15 minutes for patients to receive the order.

MEDICAL ISSUES

You must be compliant with the HIPPA Privacy Rule. Patients privacy must be ensured. Also, an onsite EMT is necessary as some patients may need immediate medical attention.

Safety of staff at the testing site is paramount and should include protective clothing, gloves and sanitizers, as well as precautions for those handling samples and waste.

CONTINUED OPERATIONS

Law enforcement will need to monitor the site throughout testing and overnight.

Medical teams are needed to remove hazardous waste daily.

City/solid waste providers will need to empty non-hazardous waste daily.

For more information about the City of Tallahassee's Mobile COVID-19 Testing Site, please contact Tallahassee Communications Director Alison Faris at 850.545.7880 or alison.faris@talgov.com.

The Florida League of Cities is working in conjunction with the state's 412 cities, towns and villages to help share vital information and updates regarding the coronavirus and its impact on the Sunshine State. For a comprehensive list of local, state and federal coronavirus resources, visit the League's Coronavirus Information Center webpage at flcities.com/coronavirus. To contact the Florida League of Cities, please call 850.222.9684 or email communications@flcities.com.



**LOCAL
VOICES
MAKING
LOCAL
CHOICES**



1. EMT will check for Doctor's Orders and provide patient with information packet
- 2a. Patients without Doctor's Orders will proceed to Telemed Station.
- 2b. Patients with Doctor's Orders will proceed to Registration.
3. Patients will proceed to Collections.