

County's Expanded COVID-19 Testing And Mobile Test Site Plan Approved

Hunterdon County is planning for mobile COVID-19 testing for residents, in addition to the no prescription needed free testing at the HMG site in Raritan Township, under the state Health Department approved county testing plan, County Health Officer Karen DeMarco reported to the Freeholders, at the October 20th meeting.

DeMarco told the Freeholders the NJ Department of Health had notified the county of approval of the county Health Department's application and plan for using \$737,339 in federal CARES Act grant funds dedicated to expanded testing. The plan includes additional testing without a physician's prescription, in conjunction with the Hunterdon Medical Group, and the funding for a mobile test site.

Freeholder Board Deputy Director Susan J. Soloway, the Health Department liaison, stated, "I believe the fact that our volunteer first responders, teachers, and other critical workers can now take advantage of the testing, without a physician's prescription, is so important. I know from those who have spoken to me it is appreciated."

The staff did a remarkable job in not only devising an approvable plan to have more residents tested, but also in meeting the deadline and the quick turnaround required for the submission of the application. Again, the Freeholders extend our thanks to HMG for their cooperation with the testing program."

Freeholder Zach Rich added, "The County's residents have been well served by the exceptional performance of the County's Health Department; the Director, the nurses, the contact tracers, the entire team throughout the pandemic. They have faced inordinate pressure to perform and have risen to the occasion.

The state's approval of the testing plan the Department submitted is another feather in their cap. I have great interest in seeing the mobile testing program implemented soon."

DeMarco said the Health Department is finalizing plans for mobile testing, and the potential for at-home testing, to create greater access for residents. An announcement for those programs is forthcoming.