

Wendy C. Brawley
District No. 70 - Richland & Sumter
Counties
217 Sagemont Drive
Hopkins, SC 29061



309-D Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Tel. (803) 212-6961
WendyBrawley@schouse.gov

Committee:
Education and Public Works

House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Henry D. McMaster
Governor, State of South Carolina
State House
1100 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

The coronavirus pandemic has caused elected leaders to rethink how best government serves its people when they are most in need of help that only their government can provide. As we combat COVID-19 across South Carolina to protect our citizens, testing is critically important. I raised my concern with officials at DHEC about the lack of testing in the rural communities that I represent in Lower Richland County and Pinewood, Horatio and Dalzell in Sumter County. I requested that DHEC release the number of coronavirus tests performed by zip code. The response was, 'we have not collected that data'. Having this information is vitally important to obtaining a more accurate assessment of the impact of the virus in a particular zip code area.

Presently, DHEC releases only the number of positive test results by zip code without referencing how many tests were provided in that zip code. A low number of positive test results does not mean that the virus is not vastly prevalent in certain zip codes, but most likely means that fewer tests are being offered to residents in those zip code areas. It is important that citizens in rural communities throughout our state have this information to exercise the precautions necessary to prevent the spread of the virus and not rely on the false impression that the virus is not a serious threat in their community.

I am asking that you require DHEC to collect data on the number of coronavirus tests performed by zip code and include that number when publically reporting the number of positive test results in that same zip code. It will help ensure more equity in testing and continued physical distancing in rural populations.

Sincerely,

Wendy C. Brawley