



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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TO: Howard County Employees

FROM: Calvin Ball
County Executive

SUBJECT: Message from County Executive Ball to Employees; Exciting Opportunity

DATE: December 4, 2020

This communication was sent via global email to all Howard County employees on Friday, December 4, 2020 at 11:25 AM

Dear Colleagues,

Throughout this COVID-19 crisis, our goal has been to keep our employees safe and ensure that all have access to important information to help equip our workforce through this tough time. I am proud that all of you have been diligent in keeping yourselves, our workforce, and our families safe.

During my State of the County address, I announced that County employees who are interested will have an opportunity to get an antibody test to determine the presence of antibodies to COVID-19. My team has worked hard to ensure that you have access to this important information and that this can be done as easily as possible.

This past month, nearly 600 of our emergency responders from Fire, Police, Sherriff, and Corrections departments took this serology test, and we found that our PPE and safety protocols are working. To learn more about the antibody test, visit the [CDC website](#).

I am pleased to let you know that the County has partnered with Quest Diagnostics to provide antibody testing to County employees. Testing will be available at any Quest Diagnostic site starting today. I encourage you to take a moment this weekend or in the coming days to get a test. This testing opportunity will be available until December 14th.

You can sign up immediately. To sign up for antibody testing, follow the steps outlined below. Getting this test is completely **voluntary**. You will not be charged for the test. Instead, Quest Diagnostics will bill your medical insurance for payment.

To Make an Appointment

Employees who wish to voluntarily participate in antibody testing can obtain an appointment to be tested at one of five Quest Diagnostic locations by [signing up here](#). You will first be asked to complete a consent form. Upon completion, you will receive a follow-up email to finalize your appointment at an available Quest Lab location. You will be able to go to any Quest location in Maryland, and you have the option of going when open- even on the weekends. You will need

to provide basic demographic and insurance information, which will be used to set up your patient portal and get a test.

What to Bring

When you show up for your scheduled appointment, you will need to have a form of identification and your insurance card. While there are no copays, your insurance will be billed for the cost of the test.

Test Results and Privacy

All testing of County employees will be authorized by a physician, Matthew Levy, D.O., who oversees the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Service's Mobile Integrated Community Health Program ("MICH"). Results will be maintained by the MICH program in a manner that adheres to the confidentiality provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA") and the Maryland Medical Records Act. These results will not be disclosed to anyone in the County Government, including your supervisor, Department head, the Department of Human Resources, or County Administration. The County Government will **only** receive anonymous aggregate data compiled by the MICH team members, specifically the total number of positive and negative test results.

Employees who test negative for the COVID-19 antibodies will be notified of the results through their Quest patient portals. Employees who test positive will be notified by Dr. Levy or a member of the MICH team.

Other Important Information

Please work with your direct supervisor if you need to get a test during work hours. If you have any questions about the test or the patient portal, please call the MyQuest Support Line at 877-291-7521. For all other questions, please call (410) 313-2013.

The antibody test does not detect an active COVID-19 infection, but whether you have had the virus or been exposed to it, even if you never displayed symptoms. If you believe you have an active COVID-19 infection, please visit the [Howard County testing page](#).

This is an innovative and exciting opportunity! I want to share how we are truly a leader in the State and nation. Please take a look at this [news coverage](#) surrounding this "bold" progress!

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
County Executive