



## DELAWARE COVID-19 TESTING PLAN

Goal: Delawareans have easy access to COVID-19 testing of their choice when and where they need it.

### Purpose of the Testing Strategy Document for Delaware

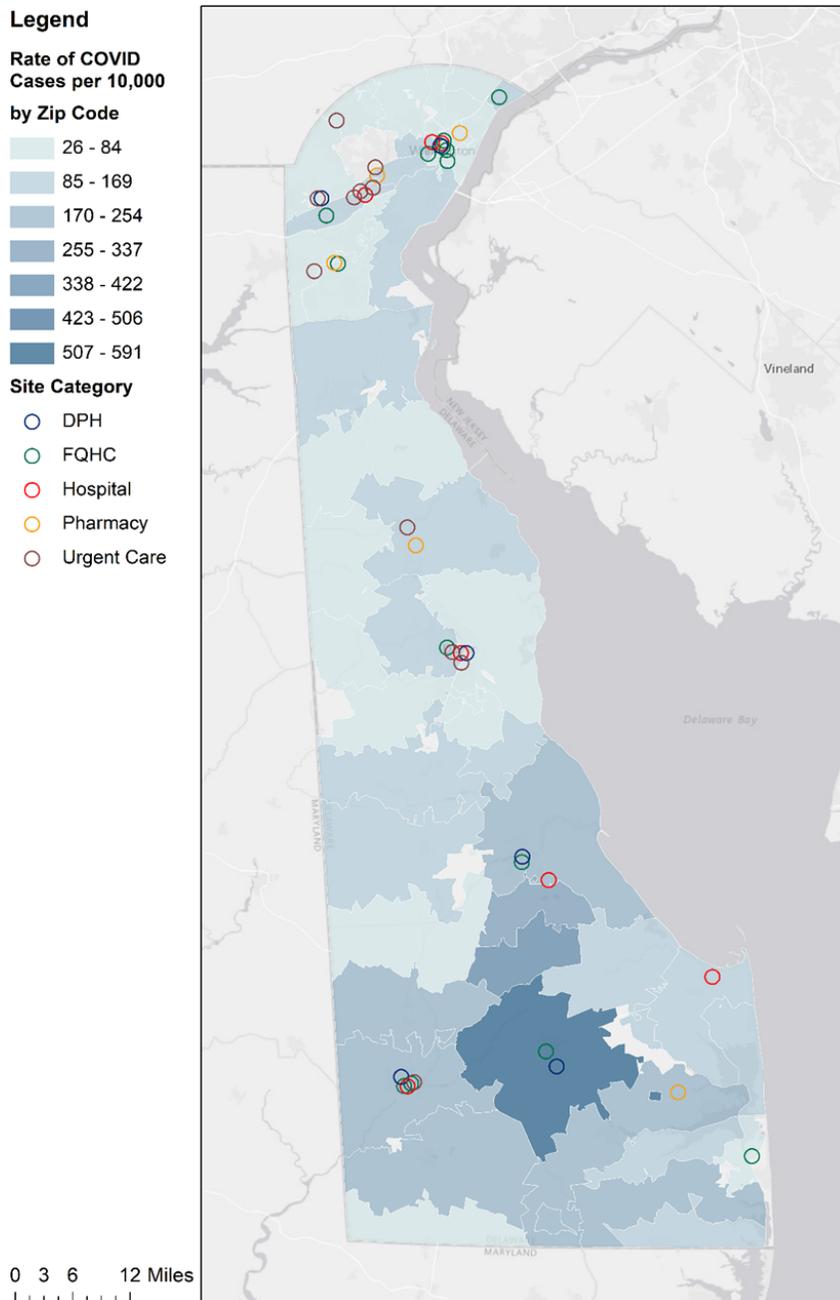
The goal of this plan is to consolidate information about the current COVID-19 testing infrastructure across Delaware and update the state's plan to increase access to testing. Specific objectives include:

- Identifying where testing is currently available given the shift in the health care sector away from hospital-based testing
  - Directly expanding testing capacity through the Public Health Lab, contracts, partnerships, and other arrangements
  - Maximizing the use of testing platforms, venues, and expanded workforce to scale testing to accommodate increased demand for COVID-19 tests
  - Providing testing at non-traditional laboratory sites
- Defining a proactive plan for testing that balances the need for:
  - Predictability: provide members of the community with easy access and consistent messages about where to get tested to help with early detection;
  - Flexibility: be responsive to outbreaks and urgent needs; and
  - Sustainability: use resources wisely given the projected duration expected.
- Providing information to testing providers, and employers about testing resources and responsibilities, including resources to provide testing for individuals who are uninsured, off-set by state test supplies and lab capacity
- Providing the basis for information to be shared with members of the community about where, when, why, and how frequently to get tested
  - Identifying testing needs of vulnerable and at-risk populations
  - Identifying barriers to efficient testing
- Communicating, collaborating and coordinating with the broad testing community to ensure alignment in approach and progress

### Current and Planned Testing

The COVID-19 testing plan includes key considerations such as access, equity and cost, and is structured to define specific strategies for key populations defined in the testing frame-

work (released May 8, 2020). The below map of current testing sites provides a visual representation of current testing access, although not all sites are open to testing all of the defined populations in the testing framework. Hospitals, for example, are testing symptomatic individuals in the community as well as those who present for care in the emergency department or are admitted. The Delaware testing strategy continues to evolve to one where all Delawareans have convenient access to testing when and where they need it. This includes a key role for non-traditional venues such as pharmacies as well as urgent care centers and primary care. Home testing kits are also now more widely available and have become a good option for non-urgent testing.



## Partners Contributing to Delaware COVID Testing Strategy

There are a range of partner organizations that play key roles in the comprehensive COVID-19 testing strategy in Delaware. Some testing services provide testing to individuals who are symptomatic or asymptomatic on a routine basis; other resources provide dedicated testing resources in response to community-based outbreaks. Routine testing is typically conducted in stable locations at set times but can also be performed at home via home testing kits. Some routine testing sites may have limited access (i.e. primary care practices or FQHCs that offer testing only to members of the practice). Testing in response to outbreaks include mobile sites that handle a high volume of tests in a short time in affected communities. Some testing providers contribute sentinel testing data from a cross-section of communities that contributes to the overall surveillance of the pandemic in the State.

Delaware COVID Testing Partners (as of June 2020)					
Partner Type	Routine/ Outbreaks	Symptomatic Testing	Asymptomatic Testing	Antibody Testing	Sentinel Surveillance Testing
Hospitals	Routine	X	Some test employees and some provide asymptomatic testing for the public, including prior to scheduled procedures. Some are testing LTC patients prior to discharge.		X
Hospital-run Stationary Sites	Routine	Some test sites require physician order.	Some test employees and some provide asymptomatic testing for the public based on physician order, including prior to scheduled procedures. Some test sites require physician order.		
Hospital-Run Community Testing Sites	Outbreaks	X	Some		
Primary Care Practices	Routine	X	Some	May provide order for outside lab, including DPHL	Some
FQHCs	Routine	X	X	May provide order for outside lab, including DPHL	Some
FQHC Mobile Testing Programs	Routine and Outbreaks	X	X		
Pharmacies	Routine	X	X		

Delaware COVID Testing Partners (as of June 2020)					
Partner Type	Routine/ Outbreaks	Symptomatic Testing	Asymptomatic Testing	Antibody Testing	Sentinel Surveillance Testing
Urgent Care Centers/ Specialty Care Centers	Routine	X	X	May provide order for outside lab, including DPHL	Some
DPH Clinics	Routine and Outbreaks	X	X	X	X
Urgent Response Testing	Outbreaks	X	X		
Employer-Based Testing Locations	Routine and Outbreaks	X	X	May provide order for outside lab, including DPHL	
Home Testing Kits	Routine and Outbreaks		X		

**Hospitals:** All of Delaware’s eight hospitals are providing COVID-19 testing to symptomatic individuals who seek care, including care in the emergency department, or those who are admitted to the hospital. Hospitals also may provide routine testing to their own employees. Testing is processed in the hospital lab, by third-party labs or is sent to the DPHL for individuals who are uninsured or when extra capacity is required. Hospitals are also performing pre-procedural testing and have recently moved toward increased testing of patients being discharged to post-acute care facilities prior to discharge. Two of Delaware’s eight hospitals are performing routine asymptomatic testing of health care workers using the Abbott ID NOW instrument and reagents supplied through the DPH Lab (DPHL).

**Hospital-Run Stationary Testing Sites:** Semi-permanent testing facilities established by local hospitals involve triaging those seeking COVID-19 testing and referring them to locations outside of the primary hospital facility. These may be a consistent drive-up location (like Bayhealth in Kent County operates at Dover Downs) or in hospital satellite locations (like Beebe Healthcare) on specific days and hours. Most testing is based on provider orders and is largely for symptomatic individuals. However, three hospital systems have set up a screening line for those who do not have a primary care provider to write an order. Tests are processed through hospital or commercial laboratories.

**Hospital-Run Mobile Community Testing Sites:** Mobile testing facilities established by local hospitals play a key role in providing COVID-19 testing to community members when there is a localized outbreak of COVID-19 or to provide testing access to vulnerable populations. These mobile testing facilities provide testing to symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who may be exposed to the virus. Some hospitals are providing mobile testing events in partnership with employers in the community (i.e. the Delaware Restaurant Association). Tests are processed through hospital or commercial laboratories or by the DPHL.

**Primary Care Practices:** Many primary care practices in Delaware offer COVID-19 testing to symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who have an established relationship with the practice when they seek care. Some tests may be performed on-site at the primary care practice; other practices may provide referrals to other community-based testing sites. Primary care practices may also order or perform a laboratory blood draw for antibody testing at an outside lab, including DPHL.

**FQHCs:** Delaware's three FQHCs, spanning all three counties, offer routine COVID-19 testing to symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who have an established relationship with the health center and seek care at the health center locations. In addition, FQHCs conduct sentinel surveillance testing to determine overall community prevalence of the virus. Tests may be processed at the FQHC, a commercial lab or DPHL. FQHCs may also order a laboratory blood draw for antibody testing at an outside lab, including DPHL.

**FQHC Mobile Testing Programs:** Delaware's FQHCs provide routine or periodic mobile testing events to outreach to and engage vulnerable populations who may not otherwise have access to appropriate testing resources. For example, Westside Community Health Center provides mobile COVID-19 testing for migrant farmworkers in Delaware's agricultural regions. Services are provided in Spanish and Haitian Creole languages to promote access. These tests may be processed at the DPHL.

**Pharmacies:** A key part of the testing strategy involves increasing testing access across communities at pharmacies. Testing is currently available at select Rite-Aid and Walgreens locations. Individuals who are symptomatic or asymptomatic may access testing at pharmacy locations during most hours of operation. The tests are processed at third-party labs or can be sent to the DPHL, including for individuals who are uninsured. The State of Delaware is in the process of contracting with Walgreens to provide expanded COVID-19 testing at many of their locations throughout the state and is looking to expand testing at other pharmacies as well.

**Urgent care centers/Specialty care centers:** Some urgent care centers and specialty care centers in Delaware are offering routine access to COVID-19 testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals at clinic locations. They may also order or perform a laboratory blood draw for antibody testing at an outside lab, including DPHL. Testing may be available at set times or throughout the hours of operation for the facility. Tests may be processed by a third-party lab or the DPHL depending on insurance coverage.

**Division of Public Health Clinics/State Service Centers:** Public Health Clinics in six of Delaware's State Service Centers offer members of the community routine COVID-19 testing, including testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals, antibody testing and sentinel testing for community surveillance by appointment. These facilities are located throughout the State to promote access to harder-to-reach communities. The tests are processed at the DPHL. DPH Clinics may perform a blood draw for antibody testing at the DPHL.

**Urgent Response Testing:** DPH and the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) in coordination with county and community partners have the capability to quickly mobilize testing resources in response to an outbreak of COVID-19 in Delaware communities. These mobile testing centers will continue to be established as needed to provide testing for symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals in a walk-up or drive-through model. These mobile testing resources have the capacity for a high volume of tests in a day in response to the outbreak. Tests will be processed by the DPHL or an outside Lab.

**Employer-Based Testing Facilities:** The State of Delaware, Hospitals, Trade Associations and Employers are partnering to assure that employees in high- and medium-risk settings have access to routine COVID-19 testing to maintain health and well-being and to reduce the likelihood of spread to co-workers and the public. Some employers may offer COVID-19 testing on-site at their locations or may partner with local health care organizations or vendor laboratories to provide testing to their employees. Home test kits are also an option for routine testing of employees, and some companies may coordinate virtual testing events. Routine testing is provided to individuals who are symptomatic and asymptomatic and may include access to antibody testing. A resource list of testing options available to employers, including home testing options and laboratories willing to partner with employers for on-site testing, can be found at: [de.gov/gettested](https://de.gov/gettested) - [Employer Testing Resource List](#). Tests may be processed by a third-party lab or sent to the DPHL. Employer testing guidance can be found at: [de.gov/gettested](https://de.gov/gettested) [Testing Guidance for Employers](#).

**Home Test Kits:** Home testing kits are a convenient option for non-urgent testing for both the public and employers. Pixel by LabCorp is the only provider that currently does not charge, though other companies may bill insurance, or provide lower group rates for employers. Information on Pixel can be found at [de.gov/gettested](https://de.gov/gettested) under Home Test Kits. Employers can access a list of home test providers at [de.gov/gettested](https://de.gov/gettested) under Employer Testing Resource List. Contact vendors directly for details.

**Antigen Testing:** Point-of-care antigen testing has recently received emergency use authorization through the FDA, and may serve as an additional testing resource, particularly in scenarios where rapid identification of positive cases may be critical (e.g. placement in congregate living settings), or as part of a wide surveillance network among asymptomatic patients. DPH is working with the pharmaceutical industry to identify supply chains and availability.

## Plan for Testing by Population

The Delaware COVID-19 Testing Plan includes specific plans for distinct population groups outlined in the testing framework (released May 8).

### Population #1: Individuals with Symptoms of COVID-19

Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested as soon as possible in a location that is convenient to them. Symptomatic individuals have access to testing in the following locations:

- Pharmacies
- Urgent care centers/specialty care centers
- Hospitals
- Hospital-run community testing sites, including in response to community outbreaks
- Primary care practices
- FQHCs
- FQHCs providing mobile testing among high-risk populations (i.e. migrant workers)
- DPH clinics
- Urgent response testing sites in response to outbreaks
- Employer-based testing

**Coverage:** Symptomatic individuals have the broadest range of access to testing. The goal is to make sure that testing is easy to access. Pharmacies and urgent care centers can provide increased access throughout the state. Primary care and FQHCs are a critical access point for individuals to receive testing through their regular provider. Hospitals are helpful for those who are more acutely ill.

**Cost:** Insurance plans cover the cost of COVID-19 testing for symptomatic individuals. For individuals who are uninsured, testing partners, including hospitals, DPH Clinics, FQHCs, outpatient offices, ambulatory care sites, urgent care centers, and pharmacies, can access DPH testing supplies and DPH lab resources to conduct these tests at no cost. These processes are also used for testing uninsured individuals for influenza and other infectious diseases.

**Risks:** The volume of symptomatic individuals is relatively low in most communities at this time. It is unclear that testing events for symptomatic individuals will be sustainable over the longer term.

**Contact Tracing:** All of the above organization types providing testing are required to submit information to the Delaware Electronic Reporting and Surveillance System (DERSS). Individuals who test positive are referred to the contact tracing program for follow-up.

## **Population #2: Individuals with Known Exposures to COVID-19**

Individuals with known exposure to COVID-19 include those individuals who receive notification from contact tracers either by phone or in person and individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 through their workplace. Individuals with known exposure to COVID-19 who are currently experiencing symptoms are addressed in the description of population #1.

Individuals with a known exposure with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 (contact tracing): Individuals who are aware of an exposure to an individual with COVID-19 outside of the workplace, but are not experiencing symptoms of the disease are eligible to be tested in these settings:

- Pharmacies
- Home test kits
- Urgent care centers/specialty care centers
- Hospital-run community testing sites, including if there is a community outbreak
- Primary care
- FQHCs
- FQHC mobile testing facilities
- DPH Clinics
- Urgent response testing sites (if there is a community outbreak)

Individuals with a known exposure at their workplace: Individuals who were potentially exposed to COVID-19 at work but are not currently experiencing symptoms of the disease are eligible to be tested in these settings:

- Employer-sponsored testing drives
- Pharmacies
- Home test kits
- Urgent care centers/specialty care centers
- Hospital-run community testing sites (if there is a community outbreak)
- FQHC mobile testing facilities
- DPH Clinics
- Urgent response testing sites (if there is a community outbreak)

**Coverage:** Pharmacies can provide convenient access throughout the state. Home test kits are convenient for non-urgent testing. Primary care and FQHCs are a critical access point for individuals to receive testing through their regular provider. Hospitals are helpful for testing their employees and for pre-procedure testing as well as community partnerships for employer-sponsored testing drives and in response to an outbreak. Per the map above, there may currently be gaps in coverage for testing of asymptomatic individuals in select locations in Southern NCC, Sussex and Kent counties. DEMA urgent response testing events and FQHC- and hospital-run community testing events could fill gaps if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 stemming from exposures.

**Cost:** Asymptomatic testing may not be covered by commercial insurance, especially ERISA self-insured plans. Costs may be offset by state resources, including testing kits and lab resources.

**Risks:** Limitations on insurance coverage for testing among asymptomatic individuals may limit options and/or place pressure on public testing locations or employer-sponsored testing locations. The state is partnering with pharmacies and other providers to ensure testing is accessible when insurance does not cover the cost.

**Messaging:** Individuals who are contacted by contact tracers as a result of being exposed to an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 are informed about testing resources available in their communities. Additional communication and guidance should be communicated to individuals about when to get tested after confirmation of exposure. FQHCs, other health care providers and community-based organizations can support messaging of when to be tested.

### **Population #3: All Long-term Care Residents and Staff and Other Congregate Settings**

Current regulations (as of June 1, 2020) mandate long-term care staff and staff at assisted-living facilities are tested weekly, with a decreased frequency, based on trends and the overall situation. This testing infrastructure is run by the long-term care facilities in partnership with DPH. Other congregate settings, such as the Department of Correction, group homes, detention centers, and the Delaware Psychiatric Center have expressed interest in testing of residents/clients and/or staff. DPH will provide technical assistance based on their operations, population, and prevalence in the community.

### **Population #4: Vulnerable Delaware Populations, including Elderly Delawareans and Members of Low-Income and Minority Communities**

Populations vulnerable to COVID-19 and susceptible to diminished access to COVID-19 testing include elderly Delawareans, individuals with mobility challenges or trouble leaving the home, individuals in low-income communities, minority populations, homeless individuals and persons with language or other barriers to care. Strategies to reach and engage these populations for testing when they experience symptoms of COVID-19, have known exposure to COVID-19 or would like a test for any reason are addressed below.

Plan for Elderly Delawareans and Individuals with Mobility Challenges: Elderly Delawareans and individuals with mobility challenges are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Individuals living in facilities, including long-term care facilities and assisted-living facilities have regular access to testing provided by the facility, and staff working in these locations are tested each week to limit potential exposures. \*

Elderly Delawareans living in the community may access testing at any community-based testing locations, including local pharmacy locations or urgent care centers/specialty care centers available in their communities. Home test kits are also an option, particularly for individuals with mobility challenges. DPH can also coordinate home testing for those unable to access other testing modalities. Alternatively, mobile testing events in senior high-rise apartment complexes or senior centers can be executed by DPH or community partners to ensure access to testing if there is an outbreak in the community.

\*Individuals working in home health and other home-based services are considered

high-risk employment settings and are encouraged to be tested once every four weeks to reduce their risk of COVID-19 and as a protection to the individuals they work with in the community.

### Members of Low-Income Communities or Individuals Who Face Other Barriers to Care:

The Delaware Community Health team anticipates that members in these high-risk communities are most likely to access testing supports through the following location types:

- Pharmacies
- Urgent care centers/specialty care centers
- DPH clinics
- Primary care
- FQHCs
- FQHC Mobile Testing Programs, including among migrant agricultural workers
- Hospital-run Community Testing Events
- Home test kits

These locations are typically more accessible to members of the individual communities and often have appropriate language capabilities to assist with education and engagement.

**Coverage:** Partnership with pharmacies, urgent care, primary care, DPH Clinics, FQHCs, including FQHC-run mobile testing events and hospital-run community testing events provide important access for these population groups.

**Cost:** Cost is not anticipated to be a barrier to testing for low-income Delawareans. The cost of the testing can be paid through a number of sources:

- Grant resources for FQHC-run mobile testing events among vulnerable population groups
- Medicaid coverage for COVID-19 testing, including supplemental coverage (pending) for individuals who are uninsured
- DPH testing supplies and lab resources provided free of charge to testing partners.

**Risks:** Testing access must be convenient. Pharmacies may offer the best access in communities. Partnership with hospital-run community testing sites and FQHC mobile testing sites may also offer access for these populations in an outbreak. Leveraging community-based organizations for messaging and outreach, including messaging in diverse languages of the community, may help promote access and the importance of testing.

**Messaging:** Clear guidance is needed for individuals about how often and where to seek testing, including if individuals think they have been exposed to COVID-19 or engaged in behavior that may put them at higher risk for COVID-19, or if they want a test for another reason. Partnering with local pharmacies, primary care, DPH Clinics, FQHCs and community-based organizations to provide COVID-19 education could support routine engagement in testing among these communities and assure that individuals are aware of the testing resources available in their communities.

## Population #5: Certain Front-Line Essential Workers

The guidance to employers issued on May 26, 2020, recommended routine testing of asymptomatic workers in medium- and high-risk settings, including health care, first responders, manufacturing, poultry industry, home visitors, public safety, education including early childhood education, etc. Employees in these high-risk settings are recommended to be tested at least every four weeks. If employees are symptomatic for COVID-19, they are covered under population #1 in this plan. Updated guidance (July, 13, 2020) is available at [de.gov/gettested](https://de.gov/gettested) - under [Testing Guidance for Employers](#).

These settings could offer routine asymptomatic testing to employees of high-risk and medium-risk industries:

- Pharmacies
- Employer-sponsored testing drives (may be in collaboration with local hospitals or hospital-run community testing events)
- Home test kits
- Urgent care centers/specialty care centers
- Primary care
- FQHCs and FQHC-run mobile testing resources
- Urgent response testing sites (if the outbreak is larger)
- Hospital-run mobile community testing facilities (if the outbreak is larger)

If there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a community or workplace setting, DEMA or hospital-run community testing facilities can collaborate with employers to offer emergent access to testing through mobile testing resources as a part of the response.

**Coverage:** As shown in the map above, there may currently be gaps in the coverage of asymptomatic testing facilities, including those that could accommodate the volume of tests required for employees. Additional community-based pharmacy capacity for testing can address gaps in access. Home testing is also a great option. Some employers and employer groups are building relationships with local hospitals to offer community-based testing options for employees to increase access. The State of Delaware is collaborating with large and small employers to develop other public-private partnerships to enhance convenient, accessible testing capability in support of robust implementation of the employer-testing strategy.

**Cost:** Asymptomatic testing may not be covered by commercial insurance especially ERISA self-insured plans. Costs may be offset by employer for on-site testing (including contracts with vendor labs or hospitals) or state resources, including testing kits and lab resources. Smaller employers may be unable to pay the cost of on-site testing for employees and should contact DPH to discuss options via <https://arcg.is/qDPPe>.

**Risks:** Targeting employees who are asymptomatic may require testing sites to be available in the off-hours to accommodate work schedules, unless there is buy-in from employers to allow time for testing during the workday. For small to medium businesses, pharmacies and home testing kits are helpful options.

**Messaging:** In addition to the guidance on the testing frequency, DPH has developed resources to assist employer groups with establishing testing programs for their workplace and facilitating regular testing for employees. These resources include a survey tool to facilitate collaboration with DEMA or the Division of Public Health in public-private partnerships to implement routine testing programs, guidance on how to implement a testing plan, contact information for private labs able to offer testing events, and suggestions on how to communicate with employees about how to engage in routine testing to promote workplace and community safety.

### **Laboratory Capacity and Procedures**

The DPH Lab in Delaware is well stocked and has capacity to process the tests required to realize the goals in this plan. In addition, some health care testing sites send specimens to commercial labs within the state that have the capability to process efficiently, and testing sites have increasing access to point of care testing machines.

### **Contact Tracing**

As noted above, all organization types providing testing are required to submit information to the Delaware Electronic Reporting and Surveillance System (DERSS). Individuals who test positive are referred to the contact tracing program for follow-up.

**If you have questions about this guidance, contact the Division of Public Health at 1-866-408-1899 or email [DPHCall@delaware.gov](mailto:DPHCall@delaware.gov).**