



HLC Accreditation 2020-2021

Evidence Document

Strategic Communications

WSU News

Wichita State and Sedgwick County Partner for COVID-19 Testing

Additional information: See WSU News on the Web page:
[https://www.wichita.edu/about/wsunews/news/2020/08-aug/
covid_testing_lab_wichita_state_9.php](https://www.wichita.edu/about/wsunews/news/2020/08-aug/covid_testing_lab_wichita_state_9.php) (Accessed May 21, 2021).



August 14, 2020 |

COMMUNITY |

PANDEMIC |

INNOVATION |

COVID-19 |

RESEARCH |

CONVERGENCE SCIENCES |

HEALTH

Wichita State and Sedgwick County partner for COVID-19 testing

By WSU Strategic Communications

!

- The Sedgwick County Commission is partnering with Wichita State University's new Molecular Diagnostic Lab to increase lab testing of COVID-19.
- A plan is being developed for providers in Sedgwick County to test at least 2,234 residents per day. Currently, only about 800 residents a day are being tested because the county – and the state of Kansas – lack laboratory testing capacity.
- Turnaround time of results is expected to be just 24 hours.

Thursday the Sedgwick County Commission took a giant step forward against the spread of COVID-19 by partnering with Wichita State University's new Molecular Diagnostic Lab (MDL) to increase lab testing capacity for nasopharyngeal swab testing and saliva testing.

Using a portion of the county's CARES Act funding, the commission voted to reimburse WSU up to \$1.5 million for initial expenses the university has already incurred. The MDL, at 4174 S. Oliver, will provide high-volume RT-PCR test analysis that checks for active COVID-19

virus, using CDC-approved protocols and state-of-the-art automation and robotics.

Over the next few weeks, Wichita State and the county will develop a plan for providers in Sedgwick County to test at least 2,234 residents per day. Currently, only about 800 residents a day are being tested because the county – and the state of Kansas – lack laboratory testing capacity.

The Wichita area has no other high-volume test labs. Rather, many Sedgwick County samples are sent to out-of-state labs, with processing being both costly and slow. The MDL expects to offer 24-hour turnaround on both nasopharyngeal swab test and saliva test results – all delivered through a patient digital portal – in order to get residents back to school and work faster and to keep our economy open.

The principle benefit of creating this increased testing capacity is to enable our region to live with this virus and minimize the impact on our local economy, university and K-12 schools. High-volume testing further allows for precision – instead of mass – quarantine, and preserves our health care clinics' and hospitals' ability to operate. Wichita State began designing this lab in April, working as a team with other labs, the medical community and industry partners.

“The university is grateful to Sedgwick County for partnering with us as we apply the latest biomedical engineering capabilities to fight this pandemic,” said WSU President Dr. Jay Golden. “The university invested seed money on this important project because we are convinced that superior lab testing is essential to minimizing the virus' spread and stemming the associated disruption of businesses, schools and daily life. Greater access and faster turnaround of tests will help county officials identify clusters more quickly and reduce the potential for further mass quarantines.

“Wichita State, as Kansas' only urban public research university, is the institution that southcentral Kansas relies on to help solve pressing community issues with economic and health ramifications, such as

COVID-19,” Golden continued. “This pandemic has certainly afforded us opportunities to step up with innovative ways to meet these challenges and serve all Kansans. The capacity we’ve built within the MDL will allow us to process tests from other counties, school districts and large-volume entities statewide. We will continue to expand with staff and equipment as need and volume increases.”

The MDL is a prime example of President Golden’s convergence sciences initiative that he started upon his arrival.

“We’ve blended our health and biological science expertise with robotics, digital transformation and automation labs to create more diverse job prospects for our graduates and more diversity in our economy,” Golden said. “By improving public health – and lowering its cost – we demonstrate how a world-class research university like Wichita State can meld its resources, talent and partnerships to impact the greater good, locally and globally.”

After the commission’s decision, Commission Chairman Pete Meitzner said: “We’re very pleased we can help Wichita State by assisting them in becoming a local, state and regional testing center. We’re looking forward to the future.”