



Ranking Member Gary Peters' Plan for Nationwide Voluntary COVID-19 Testing

A lack of available testing for novel Coronavirus 2019, or COVID-19, has hampered our country's response to this public health and homeland security crisis. To make sure that everyone who needs a test for COVID-19 receives one, I have a three-step plan to meet that goal. Understanding that the Administration has announced a number of initiatives to address this testing void, we must ensure that federal agencies act on those promises to get a great number of tests out there for the public.

1. Expand Accessibility and Availability of COVID-19 Testing

Public and commercial labs need assistance to rapidly expand capacity to produce and distribute COVID-19 tests nationally. We **must** increase test production and ensure testing is widely available. We must also address shortages of critical testing materials. Below are action items the Administration should take:

- **Utilize Defense Production Act Authorities (White House):** The President should activate Defense Production Act authorities to ramp up production and ensure sufficient supply of critical materials and testing kits.
- **Support Broad, Efficient Testing (FDA):** Expedite approval or provide waivers for laboratories ready to provide testing; support the use of high-capacity, automatic testing platforms to increase the speed and volume of testing.
- **Distribute Appropriated Funds (HHS):** Expedite the transfer of Congressionally-appropriated funding to state, local, territorial and tribal entities to support preparedness and response, including laboratory testing to identify new cases and mitigate the spread of new infections.
- **Monitor Supply Chain Issues (HHS):** Partner with public health labs, health care facilities, and private industry to identify shortages and ensure a steady supply of all materials and equipment needed for tests.
- **Update Testing Criteria (CDC):** Review and update testing criteria as appropriate to guarantee that everyone with potential exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19 is able to be tested.

2. Cover Costs of Test Kits

No one should be prevented from getting a COVID-19 test due to cost concerns. The federal government must ensure access for everyone who needs to be tested.

- **Senate Should Quickly Pass the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* that includes my Free COVID-19 Testing Act (Congress):** The House's bill includes a cost-share waiver for COVID-19 diagnostic testing for individuals enrolled in public and private health plans. I first introduced this concept in the Free COVID-19 Testing Act and it should quickly become law.

3. Act Quickly to Implement Emergency Disaster Authorities

The President has announced his intent to activate authorities under the National Emergencies Act, Stafford Act, and Social Security Act which will deliver additional resources and authorities to support the infrastructure that expanded voluntary testing will require. Agencies must act swiftly to activate such authorities, including:

- **Activate Disaster Relief Fund (FEMA):** Quickly utilize the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) to activate emergency medical delivery systems to support states or areas that are exhausting response capabilities. This should include costs such as expanding emergency room and testing capacities.
- **Support Standalone Testing Sites (FEMA):** Allocate Disaster Relief Funds to support safe standalone testing sites such as drive-by sites and tents wherever practicable to help communities contain the spread of the virus.
- **Waive Restrictive Health Care Regulations (HHS):** Execute temporary waivers or modifications to certain Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program requirements to streamline the delivery of health care services by facilities facing surges in patient volume (permissible following the President's Declaration).