

BRIEFING ROOM

Fact Sheet: President Biden Announces New Actions to Expand and Improve COVID-19 Testing

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As part of his National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness, President Biden announced today a series of new actions to expand COVID-19 testing, improve the availability of tests, and better prepare for the threat of variants. As the Administration is working around the clock to vaccinate the population, we need to continue to do what we know works to protect public health: universal masking, physical distancing, and robust testing. These down payments will serve as a bridge to comprehensive testing investments in the American Rescue Plan.

Today, President Biden announced that the Biden-Harris administration will:

Expand COVID-19 Testing for Schools and Underserved Populations. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD), will make a \$650 million investment to expand testing opportunities for K-8 schools and underserved congregate settings, such as homeless shelters. HHS will establish regional coordinating centers to organize the distribution of COVID-19 testing supplies and partner with laboratories across the country, including universities and commercial labs, to collect specimens, perform tests, and report results to the relevant public health agencies. Too often, testing can be hard to implement in non-medical settings or it can be hard for schools or other congregate settings to find the right partner to make testing work. These coordinating centers will identify existing testing capacity, match it up to an area of need, and fund that testing.

Increase Domestic Manufacturing of Testing Supplies. HHS and DOD will invest \$815 million to increase domestic manufacturing of testing supplies and raw materials that have created shortage issues, including filter pipette tips, nitrocellulose used in antigen point-of-care tests, and specific injected molded plastics needed to house testing reagents.

Rapidly Increase Virus Genome Sequencing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will invest nearly \$200 million to identify, track, and mitigate emerging strains of SARS-CoV-2 through genome sequencing. This down payment will increase CDC's

sequencing more than threefold from about 7,000 samples per week to approximately 25,000. Increasing samples will improve our ability to detect emerging variants and understand their spread with greater precision. Expanded testing is critical to support more genomic sequencing, because sequencing only occurs after a COVID-19 test comes up positive.

These investments are only the beginning of what is needed to expand testing nationwide and get the pandemic under control. The American Rescue Plan will invest \$50 billion to expand and support testing, including in priority settings like schools and shelters, and invest in U.S. testing capacity so that public health officials can track the virus in real time and Americans can efficiently get results.

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