



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Office of the Surgeon General  
Washington, D.C. 20201

April 9, 2020

Congressman Chris Smith  
2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Community-Based Testing Sites (CBTS) in Paramus and Holmdel, New Jersey. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) share your sense of urgency regarding community testing for the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). I am responding on behalf of Secretary Azar and Administrator Gaynor.

We have extended the transition period for the two federally supported CBTS locations in New Jersey through May 30, 2020.

Additionally, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved the nasal self-swab method for use in testing patients for COVID-19. This testing method is less invasive and is safer for both patients and healthcare providers. The federally supported CBTS will transition to the self-swabbing technique this week. This process will improve the safety of individuals on site by reducing personal contact, consumption of personal protective equipment (PPE), and biohazardous waste.

Thank you for the opportunity to address your concerns. If we may provide any additional information about the federally-supported CBTS program, [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

RADM Erica Schwartz, MD, JD, MPH  
Deputy Surgeon General  
Office of the Surgeon General  
United States Public Health Service