

NEWS RELEASE

Public Information Department

County of Warren

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Warren County Opens Drive-Thru COVID-19 Patient Testing Center

(FRANKLIN TWP., NJ – April 8, 2020) – Warren County opened its drive-thru COVID-19 Testing Center today, where county residents with symptoms showing possible infection with the novel coronavirus can get tested.

The County opened the center in partnership with St. Luke’s University Hospital Network (SLUHN) on the grounds of Warren County Technical School, 1500 Route 57, Washington (Franklin Township), NJ 07882.

Testing is available at no charge and for Warren County residents only, but screening and appointments are required.

In its first day of operations, the center tested a total of 41 people.

The testing site is intended “to reduce the burden on the already stressed healthcare system,” Freeholder James R. Kern III said, providing more opportunities for



Freeholder James R. Kern III, center, speaks to the media at the opening of Warren County’s COVID-19 Testing center. In the background, from left, County Prosecutor James Pfeiffer; County Administrator Alex Lazorisak; from St. Luke’s University Hospital Network, Scott Wolfe, President of SLUHN’s Warren Campus; Dr. Laura Kropf, Regional Medical Director; Michael Owsinski, Regional Director, St. Luke’s Physician Group; Karen Paul, Manager, SLW Laboratory; and Incident Commander Courtney Sartain, the county’s Public Health Planner.

county residents to get tested through a community-based testing site.

One of the smallest counties in New Jersey, Warren County set up the testing site without state or federal assistance. “Our people stepped up to the plate,” county Administrator Alex Lazorisak said, pointing out that Warren has a quarter of the staff and resources of other counties that have begun testing programs.

Kern, Lazorisak and others participating in a media briefing held midday at the site, including Warren County Health Officer Pete Summers, County Prosecutor James Pfeiffer, and Scott Wolfe, President of SLUHN’s Warren Campus, also noted the testing site was a true team effort. There was “incredible teamwork and impressive leadership” by all involved, Pfeiffer said, adding, “I’m proud to be a Warren County resident.”



Incident Commander Courtney Sartain, the county’s Public Health Planner, with Freeholder James R. Kern III, liaison for health and public safety, in the background.

“From the very beginning, Warren County knew we needed a testing site for our residents,” Kern said. “Once we were able to secure testing kits, our team went into overdrive. County administration, Health Department, emergency services and many others have all worked together to bring this site live. I also am so thankful for the dozens of volunteers who are helping make this site operational,” Kern added.

Summers said that while the testing site will help people know whether they have COVID-19, testing is not protection. “Practicing social distancing in whatever you do” is the key, Summers said, “Staying home and staying safe.”

Incident Commander Courtney Sartain, the county’s Public Health Planner who spearheaded planning and creation of the testing site, said she was grateful to the freeholders, county departments, St. Luke’s staff, and volunteers involved, noting “without them this would all still be on paper.”

Franklin Township Mayor Jeff DeAngelis said the County has had “unprecedented daily communications” with its municipal officials. He had initial concerns about the testing site being located in his community, the mayor said, but the County addressed all the issues, which allowed him to reassure with his residents.

Also participating in the briefing were Dr. Laura Kropf, Regional Medical Director, St. Luke’s Physician Group; Michael Owsinski, Regional Director, St. Luke’s Physician Group; and Karen Paul, Manager, SLW Laboratory.

The County has established a two-step scheduling process for county residents to get tested. Each patient must be screened and pre-approved by a SLUHN provider in order to

schedule an appointment, but if the patient's primary care physician is associated with another healthcare network, the patient need only call St. Luke's Warren Hills Family Practice at 908-847-3100 for the screening.

Once screened to determine if testing is warranted, the patient can schedule the test through Warren County's new COVID-19 Testing webpage, where details on testing requirements and procedures, and a link to the online scheduler are found. The site is linked from the county government website www.co.warren.nj.us and also found at www.co.warren.nj.us/Healthdept/wccovidtesting.html.

There have been questions as to why the screening must be done by a St. Luke's Physician. Using St. Luke's electronic prescription system was safer and easier for the Testing Site staff; asking patients to make a phone call to St. Luke's eliminates paperwork at the site and protects staff from unnecessary exposure to COVID-19. St. Luke's screening process eliminates an additional staff member contact with a potential COVID-19 positive patient and eliminates the need for site staff to collect and track paper prescriptions through the process.



Warren County Health Officer Pete Summers speaks to the media.

Warren County designed a site where only the specimen collector would have contact with the patient. The County has limited supplies of PPE and everyone working there is an employee or volunteer of another agency: law enforcement, emergency medical service, Health, Office of Emergency Management, or the hospital. Protecting these important healthcare workers and first responders was worth an additional phone call.

The Warren County COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Site will operate from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, Monday, April 13, and Tuesday, April 14; as well as on Saturday, April 11, from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Additional dates may be added.

For more information on COVID-19 and Warren County's response, visit www.co.warren.nj.us/Healthdept/coronavirus.html.

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