



*Better health through
laboratory medicine.*

June 15, 2020

Ambassador Deborah Birx, MD
White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator
Office of the Vice President
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Ambassador Birx:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) informs you that clinical laboratories continue to encounter problems in obtaining the sample collection and analytical test components and personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to meet our nation's COVID-19 diagnostic testing demands. We raised these concerns initially in April and are troubled to learn that many of these same problems still exist.

AACC surveyed 100 laboratories in May on the COVID-19 crisis. Included within this probe were specific questions regarding supply chain issues. We are dismayed that more than 50 percent of the laboratories report they continue to have difficulty obtaining the swabs they need to collect specimens and the reagents and test kits needed to perform diagnostic testing. Further, 40 percent of the laboratories mentioned having problems obtaining PPE needed to safeguard their personnel. The Association for Molecular Pathology and College of American Pathologists have conducted surveys that report similar findings.

One consequence of this supply shortage is that healthcare systems are not able to test everyone who may meet the criteria set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Instead, clinical laboratories are forced to develop their criteria regarding who to test based on the availability of supplies. If you and the Task Force can successfully address the supply chain issues, who has access to diagnostic testing will become more uniform across the nation.

While we recognize the difficulty federal, state, and local governments, along with the healthcare community, are encountering with this pandemic, we urge you to investigate this ongoing problem and use the authority of the federal government to obtain and allocate these vital supplies. AACC also recommends that a mechanism be created that permits healthcare facilities to regularly report their inventory levels, thereby providing the government with more

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timely access to information on supply levels and the needs of the clinical laboratory community.

AACC is a global scientific and medical professional organization dedicated to clinical laboratory science and its application to healthcare. AACC brings together more than 50,000 clinical laboratory professionals, physicians, research scientists, and business leaders from around the world focused on clinical chemistry, molecular diagnostics, mass spectrometry, translational medicine, lab management, and other areas of laboratory science to advance healthcare collaboration, knowledge, expertise, and innovation.

We look forward to working with you on these most important issues. To facilitate these interactions, or if you have any questions, please email Vince Stine, PhD, AACC's Senior Director of Government and Global Affairs, at ystine@aacc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carmen L. Wiley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Carmen L. Wiley, PhD, DABCC, FAACC
President, AACC