



Better health through
laboratory medicine.

July 28, 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 (AACCC) is providing you with an update from our ongoing survey of clinical laboratories performing COVID-19 testing. We have been conducting this survey periodically since April. AACCC is concerned that there remain significant obstacles to clinical laboratories performing their COVID-19 testing requests. We are pleased to report several improvements as well.

AACCC surveyed 53 laboratories through early July on the COVID-19 crisis. This cohort includes both commercial laboratories and hospitals/public health laboratories. Unfortunately, nearly 50 percent of the participating laboratories continue to encounter problems obtaining supplies for performing COVID-19 diagnostic testing. Their primary obstacles remain their inability to procure test kits, reagents, and swabs.

- **Test kits** - There has been little change in the percentage of laboratories able to get test kits for performing testing. In May, 48% of respondent laboratories stated they were unable to obtain test kits. This figure has increased to 58% in our July report.
- **Reagents** – Similarly, testing facilities continue to have trouble getting the reagents they need to perform testing. While there has been a slight reduction over the past few months, from 54 percent to 46 percent, it remains a significant problem.
- **Swabs** – While the number of laboratories unable to obtain swabs is still too high, there has been improvement in this area. In May, 62 percent of the participating laboratories reported a problem in getting swabs. This figure is 38 percent in our July report.

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One area where there has been significant improvement is in the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers. Only 4 percent of the laboratories reported this as a problem in the current survey compared to 32 percent in May.

We are alarmed, however, that the number of laboratories that mention they cannot perform all their COVID-19 requests has increased from 21 percent to 25 percent. AACC is concerned that unless enough supplies are procured our nation will be unable to gain control of this crisis.

AACC appreciates your and Admiral Giroir's willingness to engage the laboratory community and work towards resolving this testing crisis. We shared with our members the list of state coordinators for the national stockpile of supplies. AACC hopes that greater transparency and coordination between the government and private sector will help alleviate some of the shortage issues.

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,



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

Cc: Admiral Brett Giroir, MD