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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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El Paso, Texas

City Offers Drive Thru COVID-19 Sample Collection to Residents with Doctor's Orders

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH), the Border Regional Advisory Council (BorderRAC), and other public health partners are collecting specimens to test for COVID-19.

Samples are being collected for first responders, healthcare workers, and patients with a doctor's order. Only those members of the community who have met the testing criteria and obtained a doctor's order for testing will be allowed entrance. The ordering doctor will schedule an appointment for the drive-thru collection site for the patient.

Local doctors and clinics that cannot collect specimens for testing have already begun to use this system.

"We are implementing a system so people who do not need emergency room care can be sampled and tested while not overwhelming the healthcare system," said Wanda Helgesen, BorderRAC Executive Director.

The process for sample collection takes less than ten minutes per vehicle and includes the following:

1. Patient must first visit their Primary Care Provider (PCP) and obtain a doctor's laboratory order for COVID-19 sample collection. The PCP will make an appointment at the drive-thru specimen collection clinic for the patient.
2. The patient will arrive at the drive-thru clinic (site not disclosed to the media or the public) and will be asked to show their identification and their doctor's laboratory order by holding it up against their closed vehicle window. To maintain social distancing, it is requested that only the patient and/or a second person with a doctor's laboratory order be inside a single vehicle.
3. The patient will follow signage, drive forward as directed, and will be approached by collection specialists who will be wearing personal



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protective equipment. This is used to protect both the medical professional and the patient being screened. (Parents should explain to children ahead of time of what to expect so as to reduce fear and anxiety that may come with the scenario.)

4. At the next stage, the patient will be asked to lower their window and put on a mask that will be provided to them, so that the healthcare worker can swab the back of their nostrils and collect the needed specimen.
5. The patient will then leave the area and be provided instructions and information on how to self-quarantine or self-isolate.
6. In approximately three to five days, the results will be sent by the commercial laboratory to both the patient's physician and to the DPH.
7. The physician will advise the patient of their status and if positive, the patient will be ordered by the City/County Health Authority to self-quarantine or self-isolate at home and away from others. This will also trigger an epidemiological investigation by the DPH. The DPH member will make contact with the patient to discuss the process.

In order to protect the public's safety and to maintain patient confidentiality, only vehicles with patients being screened will be allowed access to the site. No one else will be granted access and **THIS INCLUDES MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA.**

B-Roll and sound are available to our media partners in order for you to help tell the story about what is taking place at the site.

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