

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Receives CDC answers on coronavirus testing capacity

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Washington, D.C.— U.S. Representatives Mark Pocan (WI-02) released the following statement after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) responded today to Rep. Pocan's inquiry into lab capacity to process coronavirus tests in the United States.

"After questioning the CDC about lab capacity to process coronavirus tests in the United States, today they replied with the following answers:

- *Every state public health lab has the CDC test validated and up and running.*
 - *CDC has the capacity to run 350 a day and are in the process of standing up more CDC labs to increase CDC's capacity.*
 - *As of 3/12, 81 state and local public health labs have the CDC diagnostic test validated and running.*
 - *The throughput and daily capacity of those labs is a moving target, but on an upward trajectory. The state and local public health labs are likely capable of processing at least 2,000 tests a day, and this capacity will only increase.*
 - *This week, higher throughput testing platforms were authorized for use under our Emergency Use Authorization; as a result the state and public health laboratories are bringing more daily testing capacity online.*
- *While the state and local testing capacity is increasing, it will ultimately be dwarfed as more commercial sector testing becomes available.*
 - *Lab Corp, MAYO, Quest, and ARUP are already up and running.*
 - *Quest reports it can currently run 1300 a day.*

- *LabCorp reports it can run hundreds a day and reports that it will be capable of running thousands of test a day as it ramps up.*
- *Mayo reports it can run 300-500 a day*
- *ARUP, which started testing on 3/12, projects capacity of running 1,000-2,000 tests a day.*
- *We anticipate major commercial diagnostic manufacturers to obtain FDA Emergency Use Authorization for their own COVID-19 diagnostics, which will increase daily testing capacity by thousands of tests a day.*

“Unfortunately, this response is incomplete and still fails to give us a complete picture of the country’s ability to process coronavirus tests. We continue to follow former Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Scott Gottlieb’s daily tracking of these numbers. His [estimates](#) of coronavirus testing capacity across the country is that 25,175 people can be tested per day, as of Friday 3/13, 9:00 AM.

“As of Wednesday, FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn has noted that 2.5 million coronavirus tests were available, and since multiple tests are needed per person, he explained that these are only enough to test 989,000 people. However, if we can only process 25,175 people/day—the most important metric is how many tests we can process. And we are clearly failing that metric. (At the current rate, processing 989,000 people could take over 39 days (989,000/25,175).

“The good news is that testing capacity numbers are ramping up, and the FDA is approving new types of tests that could speed up processing. Bad news is that would have been good news a month ago. By denying that a problem could exist for so long, it has cost us mightily in executing a timely and coordinated response. Now, we are seeing how far behind we are compared to countries like South Korea who have been ramping up testing and processing at pace with the outbreak.

“It is imperative that we must:

1. Ramp up even faster testing and expand lab capacity and proactively test people showing any signs in any medical settings as well as health personnel;
2. Consider more accessible testing methods like drive-thru testing;
3. And have Dr. Anthony Fauci be the only official spokesperson to ever talk about this outbreak—period.
4. Please re-read Point 3.

“We thank the administration for sharing these initial numbers they have compiled,

and we hope they continue to track and share these numbers consistently. It is their responsibility to do so.”