

UW-Milwaukee: Launches mandatory COVID-19 testing of students in residence halls

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MILWAUKEE _ The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee is requiring testing for COVID-19 for all students who live in UWM residence halls in an effort to manage infections through early identification, contact tracing and quarantine.

Campus health officials began administering antigen testing to a small cohort of students in August. That will be scaled up and moved to the UWM Student Union in the next two weeks to accommodate regular testing of all students living in the residence halls. The testing facility in the Student Union is expected to be open by Sept. 14.

On Aug. 6, UW System President Tommy Thompson announced a \$32 million COVID-19 testing regimen for the Fall 2020 semester across UW System campuses, including UWM.

With the UW System funding and assistance from UWM's College of Nursing, UW-Milwaukee aims to test all students living on campus at least every two weeks, said Aamir Siddiqi, interim campus health officer. Achieving that goal will depend on the availability of supplies and the addition of needed staff.

Antigen tests can identify an active coronavirus infection from a nasal or throat swab by detecting specific proteins on the surface of the virus. Once at full capacity, the equipment UWM acquired can process results at a rate of about 40-50 tests an hour, with immediate results.

Since Aug. 3, 176 students have been tested. A dashboard for tracking positive

cases on campus can be found [here](#).

Over the summer, testing for COVID-19 was done through the on-campus medical clinic, Norris Health Center. In accordance with public health guidelines, only students with symptoms and those in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 were tested during that time. With the introduction of antigen testing, students living in residence halls will be tested even if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.