

Wisconsin National Guard Team: Sent to Milwaukee County House of Corrections to collect specimens for COVID-19 testing

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FRANKLIN, Wis. — A team of nearly 30 Wisconsin National Guard troops was sent Saturday to the Milwaukee County House of Corrections in Franklin to establish a mobile COVID-19 testing site to collect specimens from staff and inmates there.

Milwaukee County requested the Wisconsin National Guard's assistance after the facility reported multiple cases, and the Wisconsin National Guard will collect specimens from approximately 950 staff and inmates.

The specimens will be sent to a state lab for analysis.

Citizen Soldiers and Airmen from the Wisconsin National Guard mobilized in response to a public health emergency that Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers declared March 12. Since that time, teams of Wisconsin National Guard members have mobilized and begun training to establish mobile testing sites to collect specimens. A team of approximately 30 troops responded to a request for assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Sheboygan County Division of Public Health at a Sheboygan senior living facility April 5 for one day to collect specimens from staff and residents there, and the Guard is preparing for additional specimen collection missions in the coming days and weeks for which it is bringing on additional troops.

The Wisconsin National Guard has fulfilled a variety of roles across the state since its response to the COVID-19 pandemic began. Ongoing Wisconsin National Guard

missions include a warehousing mission where 20 Citizen Soldiers are assisting the Wisconsin Department of Health Services at a state warehouse receiving personal protective equipment (PPE) shipments from around the state, repackaging them, and redistributing them to areas in need.

Another team of six reported this week to an alternate care facility being established at Wisconsin State Fair Park to assist with warehouse operations there as that facility comes online.

Teams of 12 troops are serving as medical and administrative staff at two separate state-run voluntary self-isolation facilities in Milwaukee and Madison, while another 30 are serving at a Milwaukee County-run self-isolation facility.

Meanwhile a team of six Guard members are supporting the Dane County Coroner's Office and assisting their office with mortuary affairs operations.

The Wisconsin National Guard has completed a number of missions since the state's response began in March including when it sent a team of six medics to a senior living facility in Grafton for three days to augment the staff after a COVID-19 outbreak resulted in a temporary staffing shortage.

The Guard also mobilized more than 2,400 troops to serve as poll workers in 71 of Wisconsin's 72 counties during the state's election April 7 in support of the Wisconsin Elections Commission. In the days leading up to the election, the Guard also supported the WEC and procured and distributed hand sanitizer, wipes, spray bottles, and PPE to polling sites across the state.

Additional troops stand ready to assist the state in any way, and the Guard is working to increase the number of teams available to conduct additional specimen collection missions at mobile COVID-19 testing sites.

"We continue to work hand-in-hand with our partners across Wisconsin in state and local government to ensure the Wisconsin National Guard is in position to provide timely, efficient responses, when our support is requested," said Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp, Wisconsin's adjutant general. "We are Citizen Soldiers and Airmen who live and work in these same communities, and as your neighbors, we're honored to be a part of this all-of-Wisconsin effort to fight COVID-19."

More than 450 Wisconsin National Guard troops are currently mobilized in support

of the state's COVID-19 response.