

**NEW HAMPSHIRE COVID-19
FIRST RESPONDER OPTIONAL SCREENING
TEST (FROST) PROGRAM**

November 3, 2020

*New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
and New Hampshire Division of Fire Standards and Training
& Emergency Medical Services*

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For questions about this plan, please contact:
NH Department of Health and Human Services
129 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301
Phone: (603) 271-5980 Email: FROST@DHHS.NH.GOV

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Responder Optional Screening Test program (FROST) enables routine COVID-19 screening for first responders (police, fire and emergency medical services [EMS]) working in the state of New Hampshire (NH) who are at higher risk than the general population because of their routine community interactions. FROST aims to identify asymptomatic individuals with COVID-19.

Participating first responder organizations will receive BinaxNOW testing cards from the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The implementation of FROST is flexible, with a range of acceptable strategies to test all participating first responders monthly: 25% weekly, 50% biweekly or 100% monthly, dependent on local logistic and resources.

If an asymptomatic first responder tests positive, the positive individual will be isolated and undergo an anterior nares or nasopharyngeal (NP) RT-PCR test immediately, ideally within 24 hours, but no later than 48 hours after the positive antigen test. If the RT-PCR test is positive, NH DHHS and the participating first responder organization will enact COVID-19 infection control strategies, including isolation, quarantine, contact tracing, reactive team testing, and other protective measures in these facilities. If the RT-PCR test is negative, and the person remains asymptomatic, the individual can return to work and resume all normal activities.

NOTE: FROST utilizes antigen testing for asymptomatic screening, in accordance with [CDC guidance for utilizing antigen testing for asymptomatic screening purposes of high-density critical infrastructure workers](#). Therefore, FROST operates in accordance with State recommendations to only use antigen testing for diagnostic purpose among symptomatic individuals. The required confirmatory RT-PCR for positive antigen test results will limit unnecessary response to false positive antigen results.

I. BACKGROUND

First responders (police officers, firefighters and emergency medical services [EMS]) are designated as [critical infrastructure workers](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic [1]. The National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) recognizes first responders as high risk for acquiring infection, medium risk of severe morbidity and mortality, high risk for negative societal impact, and high risk for transmitting infection to others [2].

In response, the State of New Hampshire (NH) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has established the First Responder Optional Screening Test program (FROST). FROST is an optional, flexible program for the nearly 13,000 statewide first responders.

Table 1.1 Number of First Responders in New Hampshire

Occupation	Total
Police	4,374
Fire and EMS	8,462
Total	12,836

Definition of Screening

FROST utilizes antigen testing for screening, not diagnostic purposes, following [CDC guidelines for testing asymptomatic individuals without known or suspected exposure to SARS-CoV-2 for early identification in special settings](#). The CDC definition of screening testing is as follows:

“Screening testing for SARS-CoV-2 is intended to identify infected persons who are asymptomatic and without known or suspected exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Screening testing is performed to identify persons who may be contagious so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. Examples of screening include testing in congregate settings, such as a long-term care facility or a correctional facility, a workplace testing its employees, or a school testing its students, faculty, and staff. See CDC’s [Overview of Testing for SARS-CoV-2...Considerations for Non-Healthcare Workplaces](#)...FDA’s [FAQs on Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#) also address screening testing for SARS-CoV-2. [3]”

Testing asymptomatic individuals without known or suspected exposure to SARS-CoV-2 for early identification in special settings

The CDC states, "Viral testing of workers without symptoms may be useful to detect COVID-19 early and stop transmission quickly, particularly in areas with [moderate to substantial community transmission](#)." CDC further acknowledges that a screening testing approach may be considered in workplace settings where “physical distancing is difficult and workers are in [close contact](#) (within 6

feet for 15 minutes or more) with co-workers or the public” and “where continuity of operations is a high priority (e.g., [critical infrastructure sectors](#))” [5]. FROST is consistent with this guidance. Routine and recurrent testing of asymptomatic individuals in an identified target population also serves a surveillance function and helps identify and track spread of COVID-19 in communities. FROST supplements (and does not replace) existing COVID-19 testing in communities already experiencing increasing COVID-19 community transmission.

II. LOGISTICS

Eligibility

Organizations that meet inclusion criteria will be eligible but not required to participate in FROST, while individuals within the organization are free to choose not to participate in testing. For best sensitivity, however, up to 100% of their eligible first responders should be tested monthly. Inclusion criteria are shown below:

Table 2.1 FROST Inclusion Criteria

Organization Inclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Police Departments, Fire Departments, and Emergency Medical Services○ Organizations may be publicly or privately funded○ Organizations must have clinical staff onsite trained and willing to perform specimen collection○ Organization must have a CLIA certificate¹
First Responder Inclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Elects to participate with no coercion○ Asymptomatic○ Not tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 3 months○ At least occasionally physically present at the organization (i.e. is not teleworking)○ Agrees to obtain RT-PCR within 48 hours following a positive antigen test

Note Regarding Symptomatic Individuals

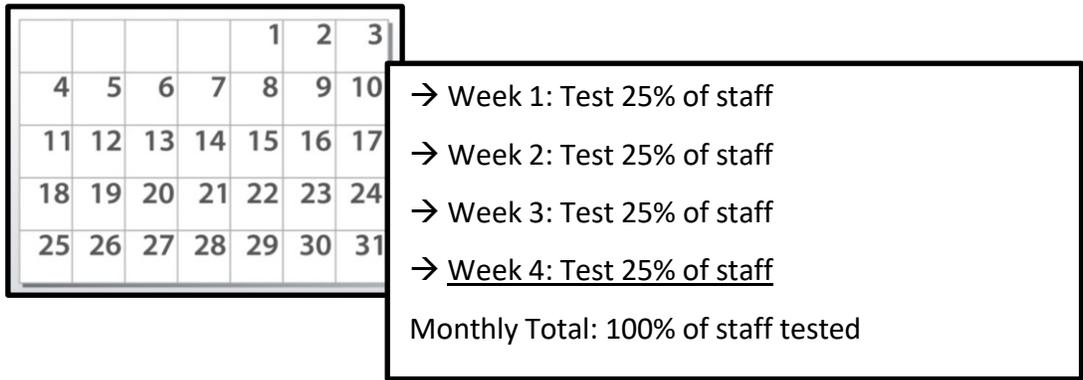
The FROST program is intended to test asymptomatic first responders. First responders who develop any new and unexplained symptoms compatible with COVID-19 should consult their healthcare providers and be tested under appropriate infection control. Healthcare providers should follow DHHS testing recommendations to determine the appropriate testing strategy and location.

Scheduling

Organizations should develop their own schedule based on the model below. One example is to divide eligible staff into four approximately equal groups. These groupings can be achieved according to job type, usual shift, or randomly such as quarter of birth year or alphabetically. Test one group each week so that at the end of the month, 100% of eligible staff have been tested. Another example is to simply test 100% of eligible staff once a month.

¹ Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA), 42 U.S.C. §263a, that meet the requirements to perform moderate, high or waived complexity tests.

Figure 2.2 Sample Calendar



Specimen Collection

The FROST program will use the Abbot BinaxNOW antigen test cards. The testing will need to be performed by an organization that has Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certification and appropriately trained personnel to perform the test.

The direct nasal swab should be collected in accordance with the package insert for BinaxNOW, referenced below. It can be self-collected under supervision by a trained staff member.

Review and follow CDC’s [Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Point-of-Care Testing](#).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The trained staff member collecting the nasal swab on an employee and those running the test on the BinaxNOW card should wear appropriate PPE consisting of: surgical face mask, eye protection (goggles or face shield that protect the front and side of the eyes), gown, and gloves. Gloves should be changed between patients, but if no physical contact and no contamination of PPE occurred during a patient encounter, then face mask, eye protection, and gown can be re-used. Hand hygiene should be conducted at a minimum before donning gloves, after glove removal, and in-between patients. For trained staff member overseeing self-collection of a nasal swab collection, maintain 6ft of distance and wear a surgical facemask. For individuals performing self-swabbing, no PPE is needed. See CDC guidance for [Handling and Processing Specimens Associated with COVID-19](#).

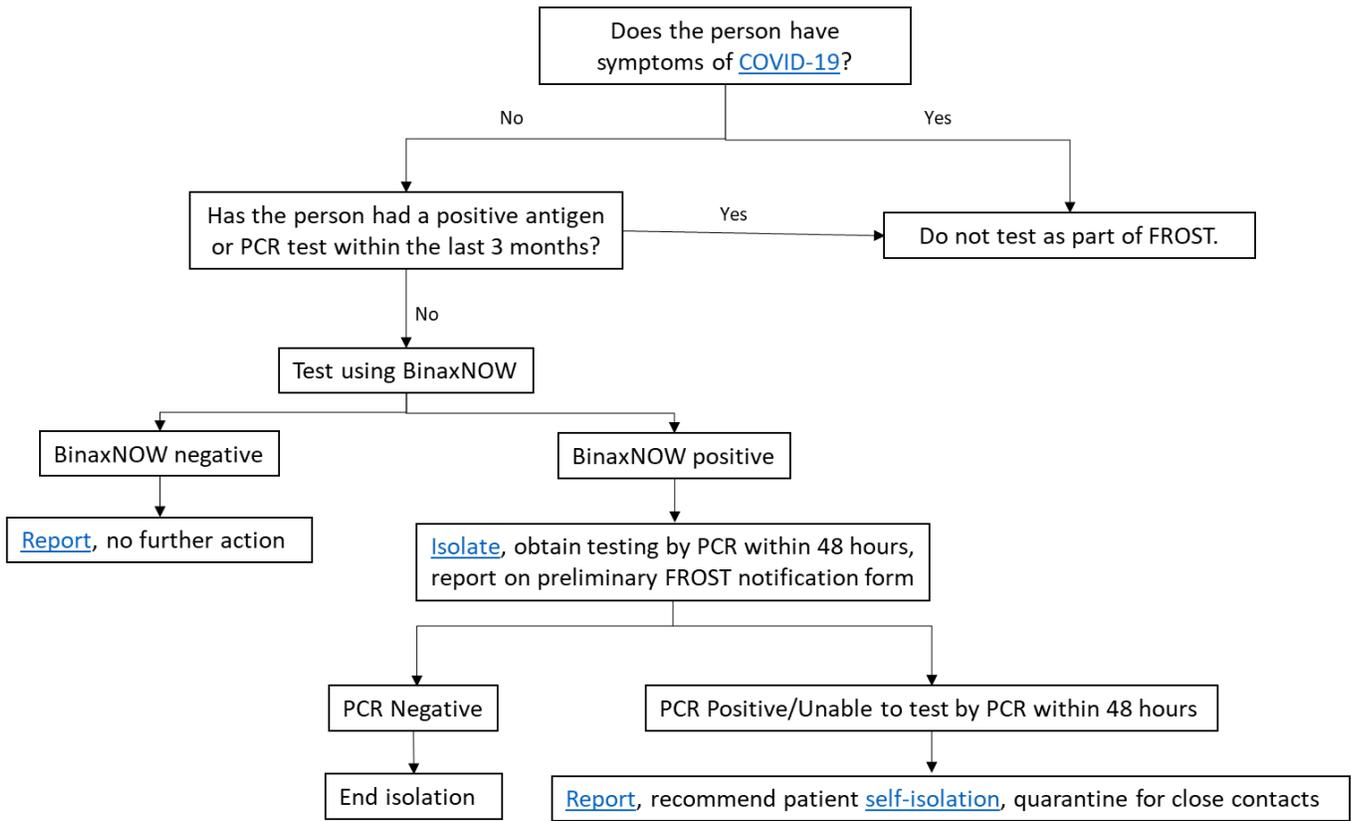
Informed Assent

Individuals may elect to not participate in testing at any time. Those who elect to participate in testing should receive clear information on:

- The manufacturer and name of the test (Abbott BinaxNow), the type of test (antigen test), the purpose of the test (to identify NH first responders who are asymptotically infected with COVID-19), the reliability of the test (i.e., risk of false positive test results), any limitations associated with the test, who will pay for the test (NH DHHS), and how the test will be performed (anterior nares swab), and
- How to understand what the results mean, actions associated with negative or positive results (isolation while seeking PCR within 48 hours of antigen test), who will receive the results (NH DHHS), how the results may be used (see algorithm below), and any consequences for declining to be tested (none).

Individuals tested are required to receive patient fact sheets as part of the test’s [emergency use authorization](#).” [4] See employee FAQs and informational sheet in [Appendix D](#).

III. TESTING ALGORITHM



IV. RESPONSE TO A POSITIVE ANTIGEN TEST RESULT IN FROST²

Antigen tests are less accurate than PCR-based tests and may give false positive results when used in areas of low-prevalence of COVID-19 and in asymptomatic individuals. If the BinaxNOW screening test is positive as part of FROST, the next steps are critical to unnecessarily avoid disruption of your organization’s services if the test is false positive, but also respond to minimize transmission if the test is true positive:

1. If the BinaxNOW antigen test is positive, the first responder whose test is positive should immediately
 - a. put on a surgical mask (if not already),
 - b. be dismissed from the facility, and
 - c. instructed to self-isolate pending RT-PCR results.
2. The individual should acquire follow-up RT-PCR testing as soon as possible (ideally same day) but no later than 48 hours following the positive antigen test. This confirmatory test is necessary due to the fact that antigen tests may return false positive results when performed on asymptomatic individuals, such as in a screening program such as FROST. The follow-up PCR test can be arranged by accessing ESF-4 ([Appendix D](#)) for priority testing, or one of the existing community testing [sites](#).

² This guidance is specific for FROST. Other guidance may apply for other uses of the BinaxNOW, such as use for symptomatic persons or in long term care facilities.

3. The organization that collected the RT-PCR specimen is responsible for notifying the person being tested of their test result. When RT-PCR results are available:
 - a. If the RT-PCR test is negative, and the person remains asymptomatic, the individual can return to work and resume all normal activities. A negative RT-PCR test acquired within 48 hours likely indicates that the BinaxNOW antigen test result was a false positive.
 - b. If the RT-PCR test is positive, the individual should continue to follow instructions for isolation. The first responder organization and DHHS will work together to control any additional spread within the organization such as through cleaning, additional testing and quarantine of close contacts. The individual can return to work when [all return to work criteria](#) are met.

What is a False Positive?

A false positive is a test result indicating the infection is present when it is not. Communities where there is a lower incidence of COVID-19 have a higher likelihood of antigen tests returning false positive results. For example, BinaxNOW’s specificity is such that if used among persons where <1% actually have disease, <40% of positive test results are true positive. Therefore, all positive antigen tests in FROST must be confirmed with an RT-PCR test within 48 hours. If the PCR test is negative, and the person remains asymptomatic, the antigen test result will be considered a false positive, meaning the individual likely does not have COVID-19. If the individual is unable to obtain a PCR test within 48 hours, they will be treated as a true positive.

For more information on understanding antigen tests, review CDC’s [Interim Guidance for Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#).

Table 4.1 COVID-19 Prevention and Response Resources

NH DHHS Guidance
<p>First Responder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ESF Guidance – Appendix D ○ NHFA Registration link <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ https://nhfa-ems.com/frost/ <p>Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employee Travel and Quarantine Guidance ○ Health Alert Network (HAN) messages to provide new guidance and information regarding COVID-19. (To sign up email health.alert@nh.gov) ○ Public Health Partner Calls, Thursdays at 12:00pm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/94841259025 ➢ Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656 ➢ Meeting ID: 948 4125 9025 ➢ Password: 003270 ○ For individual consultations, contact 603-271-4496 (after-hours: 603-271-5300)

Response

- [Self-Isolation Guidance](#)
- [Self-Quarantine Guidance](#)
- [What are isolation, quarantine, and self-observation?](#)
- [Return to Work Criteria and Crisis Staffing Guidelines](#)
- Various translated documents can be found at <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/resources-guidance/residents.htm>

CDC Guidance

- [Guidance for First Responders, Law Enforcement, and Public Services](#)
- [Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Been Exposed to COVID-19](#)
- [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)

V. TESTING COORDINATION

Test Results – Notification Process

BinaxNOW test results must be reported to the NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS). Reporting all personally identifiable information for COVID-19 test results is required by [federal](#) and [state](#) law. This includes reporting positive, negative, and invalid results. Results must be submitted at least daily and within 24 hours of the result being available. Organizations performing point-of-care testing have two options for submitting test results:

POSITIVE ANTIGEN REPORT:

- Complete FROST COVID-19 Case Reporting Form (Appendix E)
 - Fax to 603-271-0545

NEGATIVE ANTIGEN REPORT:

- Enter test results for each patient tested via an [online form](#).
- Submit daily results for multiple patients via a specially formatted file submitted through a secure file transfer solution. Instructions for this method are [online](#).

RT-PCR Access

For the RT-PCR tests following a positive screening BinaxNOW, individuals should; Follow ESF-4 Guidance (Appendix D) for priority testing, utilize their primary care provider, or obtain testing at one of the statewide community testing [sites](#). Following confirmed positive tests, any additional facility/site testing can be coordinated with DHHS, and may include the mobile testing teams or the fixed sites.

Roles and Responsibilities

The COVID-19 Coordinating Office (CCO) is responsible for managing agreements, coordinate BinaxNOW distribution, CIAA waiver verification, and monitoring participation rates. The NH Department of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services (FSTEMS) will provide the registration portal, training, and communication updates to the primary agencies.

VI. REFERENCES

1. <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19>
2. <https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/09/national-academies-release-draft-framework-for-equitable-allocation-of-a-covid-19-vaccine-see-public-comment>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/testing-non-healthcare-workplaces.html>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/testing-non-healthcare-workplaces.html>

APPENDIX A

Registration Form (To be completed online)

Organizations wishing to participate in FROST must visit <https://nhfa-ems.com/frost/> to complete online registration through NH Department of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services (FSTEMS).

The following information is necessary. For questions and concerns email FROST@DHHS.NH.GOV.

- **Primary Organization Name**
- **Organization Address** (this address will be used to deliver testing kits)
- **Name and Email of Authorized Signatory for distribution/reporting agreement**
- **CLIA Waiver Certificate Number**
- **Organization Demographics total number of Police / Fire / EMS (Fire and EMS organizations should report under Fire)**
- **Secondary Organizations testing under primary agency (Police, Fire, additional first responders)**
 - **Organization name and Type (Police, Fire, EMS, Other)**
 - **Total number of Staff (Police, Fire, EMS, Other)**

** Privacy statement: All information shared will be kept confidential and is solely for purposes of the FROST program. This information will not be otherwise used or distributed.*

APPENDIX B

Program Start-Up Information

Date: Sunday, October 25, 2020

To: [Facility Name]

From: New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and New Hampshire Division of Fire Standards and Training & Emergency Medical Services

Thank you for electing to participate in FROST. Below are instructions for next steps to guide your participation.

Next Steps:

1. Within 48hrs of registration the Primary Signatory should receive the information for completing the agreement. Please complete agreement and return to DHHS. (REMOVED11/15/20)
2. Request BinaxNOW testing cards from the State Public Health Lab @ ESU@DHHS.NH.GOV
3. Determine a schedule for staff testing.
 - a. Example- Divide eligible staff into four groups, each group consistent of 25% of eligible staff. Test one group each week so that at the end of the month, 100% of eligible staff have been tested.
4. Conduct testing of staff according to the established schedule. Follow manufacturer instructions to perform specimen collection.
5. Report test results to DHHS
 - a. If any results come back positive, send the individual for follow-up PCR testing within 48 hours.
 - b. Consult with the State for actions regarding infection prevention and control if any confirmatory PCR test results come back positive.
6. Report organization testing data to FSTEMS via web portal @ <https://nhfa-ems.com/frost/>

If you have any questions about next steps, please reach out to the NH DHHS COVID-19 Coordination Office by phone (603-271-5980) or email (FROST@DHHS.NH.GOV).

APPENDIX C

Information for Participating First Responders

Information to know before you get tested:

- The BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card made by Abbott Diagnostics will be used for FROST
- The purpose of this test is to detect parts of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 infection. The test can be used to diagnose COVID-19 in symptomatic persons, but for this program, will be used among asymptomatic persons.
- The test requires a nasal swab
- Especially when used in asymptomatic persons, the BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card test sometimes can give false positive results, which could result in: recommendation to isolate, monitoring of close contacts for symptoms, and temporarily limit your ability to work
- If you test positive using the antigen card, you must obtain a PCR test within 48 hours
- The purpose of the PCR test is to determine whether the initial positive was a true positive
- All results will be reported to the DPHS
- The cost of the BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card will be covered by the federal government, whereas the cost of test coordination will be covered by the State of New Hampshire
- You do not have to participate in this program, and if you choose not to, there are no negative consequences

Other important information:

FDA Emergency Use Authorization: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/vitro-diagnostics-euas>

BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Diagnostic (Most Recent Letter of Authorization) and Date EUA Originally Issued: <https://www.fda.gov/media/141567/download>

BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Fact Sheet: <https://www.fda.gov/media/141569/download>

APPENDIX D



ESF-4 Procedures for First Responders
New Hampshire State Emergency Operations Center
COVID-19

SEOC ESF-4 COVID-19 Expedited Analysis at the Public Health Lab – FROST Program

First responders who are being screened under the FROST Program where a positive test result occurs shall follow the protocol below.

PCR Testing Requirement

- Any member who receives a positive rapid test result at a FROST location should acquire a PCR test as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours, but no longer than 48 hours.
- The member can contact any one of the below locations to request a PCR test. The member needs to take a DHHS test requisition form with them to their appointment. This form will have the DOS physician’s name and contact information already filled out.
- The member’s department must arrange transportation of the tested members specimen to the Public Health Lab (PHL) located on the south side of 29 Hazen Drive. (More information provided [below](#).)
- The specimen will be packaged by the provider for transportation and will be released to a member of the first responders department for transportation to the PHL. **The positive member cannot drop off the specimen themselves.**
- The specimen will be packaged in a safe manner, and the person transporting doesn’t need any special training or protection to transport the specimen to the PHL.
- The member’s department needs to contact the PHL at (603) 271-4661 to let them know that a specimen will be dropped off.

PCR Testing Locations

ConvenientMD Locations:

3 Nashua Road, Bedford	(603) 472-6700
77 Daniel Webster Highway, Belmont	(603) 737-0550
8 Loudon Road, Concord	(603) 226-9000
14 Webb Place, Dover	(603) 742-7900
351 Winchester Street, Keene	(603) 352-3406
551 Meadow Street, Littleton	(603) 761-3660
565 Amherst Street, Nashua	(603) 578-3347
599 Lafayette Rd, Portsmouth	(603) 942-7900
1 Portsmouth Avenue, Stratham	(603) 772-3600
125 Indian Rock Road, Windham	(603) 890-6330

Preregistration is available online at <https://convenientmd.com/covid-19-testing/> and walks-in are welcome.

NH SEOC ESF-4

MMRS Site Locations:

Terrill Park Drive, Concord
Garden Lane, Londonderry (Exit 4 bus terminal)

Appointments can be made by visiting https://business.nh.gov/DOS_COVID19Testing/.

Clear Choice MD Locations:

24 Homestead Place, Alton	(603) 822-4713
96 Daniel Webster Hwy, Belmont	(603) 267-0656
1 Beehive Drive, Epping	(603) 734-9202
558 Mast Road, Goffstown	(603) 232-1790
7 Cinemagic Way, Hooksett	(603) 782-5112
410 Miracle Mile, Lebanon	(603) 276-3261
750 Lafayette Road, Portsmouth	(603) 427-8539
75 Laconia Road, Tilton	(603) 729-0050

Appointments can be made by contacting the facility numbers listed above. Walk-ins are also welcome.

PHL Specimen Drop Off at 29 Hazen Drive, Concord



Parking Lot View



Entrance for Specimen Drop Off

- The door to this entryway will be unlocked, so the specimen can be dropped off at any time.
- Upon entering the unlocked entry door, the white specimen refrigerator is on the right.
- Specimens and the [Test Requisition Form](#) are to be placed in the refrigerated portion of the appliance, NOT the freezer. Regardless of whether the PHL is open for business, this is where ALL specimens are to be left for processing.
- The PHL is open from approximately 0600 to 2300 hours, 7 days a week. After hours, the refrigerator in the entryway is locked with a combination padlock. If a specimen is dropped off after hours call the ESF-4 desk for the refrigerator combination code.
- After the analysis is complete notification will be made to the member.

Please feel free to contact the ESF-4 desk at (603) 223-3718 with any questions.

APPENDIX E



New Hampshire Confidential COVID-19 Case Report Form v 11/3/2020
For Reporting Asymptomatic Antigen Screening Test Results

This form should only be used to report test results from the FROST Program

Report Date: ___/___/___

Patient Information

Name (Last) (First) (M.I.)
Date of Birth Age Sex: Male Female Other
Address City/Town State Zip
Phone: Cell Home Work
Race: White Black Asian Pacific Islander Native Am./Alaskan Nat Unknown Other
Ethnicity: Hispanic Not Hispanic Unknown
Occupation/Employment (select all that apply): Fire Police EMS Healthcare Other
Employer/Institution (name and location [City, State]):

Test Information

Does the patient have symptoms of COVID-19? Yes No Unknown If yes, onset: ___/___/___
Test Results: Positive/detected Negative Indeterminate/Inconclusive Invalid
Antigen Test Type: BinaxNOW Other: Specimen Source: Nasal Other:
Specimen Collection Date: ___/___/___ Was appropriate PPE used: Yes No Unknown
Location where specimen tested:

Risk Factors (check all that apply within the 14 days prior to diagnosis or specimen collection if asymptomatic)

International/Domestic Travel: Yes No Not asked Unknown Details:
Contact to a case: Yes No Not asked Unknown Details:
No known risk factors: Yes No Not asked Unknown
Additional Details (e.g., including names, relationship of contact and venue):

Health Care Provider Reporting Information

Person Reporting: Phone 603-568-0969
Provider Facility/Practice Name FSTEMS Dr Joey Scollan
City/Town Concord State NH
Fax to: (603) 271-0545 Office Phone: 603-271-4496
For NH DHHS Use Only Entered in NHEDSS Assigned to Investigator
Confirmed Probable Suspect Not a case