

# MDHHS LIBRARY COVID TEST TALKING POINTS

*From MLA's Executive Director Debbie Mikula*



- This is a pilot program, administered by Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services.
- Library of Michigan and Michigan Library Association are working with MDHHS but this is MDHHS's program, we will help with support/communication, fielding media requests.
- Very small pilot/trial project - 18 library buildings were selected by MDHHS in an equity driven approach based on the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)
  - (for reference of how small this pilot is – there are 396 library systems, over 650 library buildings in the state)
- MDHHS has every intention of it growing. MLA believes that this will be a great opportunity for libraries that want to participate to get involved as distribution points in their communities. Not all will want to participate for various reasons (like capacity, limited hours). And...not all will be asked to participate, decisions are up to MDHHS and it is an opt-in program. MDHHS will reach out to select, qualifying libraries when the program expands and moves past the pilot stage. No need to call them.
- Why begin as a pilot? Over the Counter Tests are very scarce. There is no timeline yet for increasing the supply of test kits or adding more libraries yet due to supply constraints. They will see how this trial goes and keep it moving forward.
- 300 test kits were sent to each of the 18 libraries, so about 5500 kits sent out in this pilot/trial program
- Limit 5 test kits/household can be given out.

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- Selected libraries should have had them in hand January 14. Some have passed out all their kits over the weekend.
- Why Libraries? Libraries are more than just books and that this “resource” is being provided because libraries are about providing resources. MDHHS was thinking outside the box to find community organizations that people trust and are in the heart of every community to give them access to the kits besides health care agencies. Other partners of MDHHS include schools, community action agencies, local Departments of Health.
- Many of Michigan’s libraries are ready to provide access to these test kits for our most vulnerable citizens and have been asking for some time how to get involved.
- MDHHS is very flexible about how each library chooses to distribute – they are not prescriptive about the “handoff”. Libraries will need to prepare/train staff and set up individualized protocols for distribution to the public. Guarantee that the Media will ask how libraries are distributing them so nobody that is sick is coming into the library. Each library needs to make their own best decision, but many will have them available in their lobby or are handing them out at curbside. You should tell them to contact the participating library about how this is being done directly.
- Privacy Concerns: There is no tracking requirements of patrons and MDHHS is not mandated to collect information from citizens.
- Liability Concerns: Library staff are not there to administer the tests or explain the use of the test (this is provided in a sheet by MDHHS passed out with the test).
- After this first phase/trial, MDHHS will consider input from the participating libraries and add additional sites based on availability of test kits.