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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: April 24, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry,  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CHH", is written over the printed name of the County Administrator.

Re: **Virus Testing Kits, Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment**

One of our most frustrating problems has been to try and receive sufficient testing supplies as well as personal protective equipment (PPE). I have stated this fact on every update I have given the Board regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Without an adequate supply of both, we cannot begin to consider relaxing the present State Executive Order restrictions designed to reduce the infectious spread of COVID-19.

These restrictions should remain in place until we have solved these two most problematic supply issues. After reading a recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) bulletin, I inquired of staff whether the County had any access to the material referenced in the bulletin. The response is fairly straightforward from Assistant County Administrator John Voorhees who essentially states there continues to be no real relief in either receiving adequate testing supplies and materials or PPE.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services  
John Voorhees, Assistant County Administrator  
Dr. Bob England, Director, Health Department



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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: April 23, 2020

To: C. H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

From: John Voorhees  
Assistant County Administrator

Re: Follow up to FEMA Advisory memo

In response to your memo, dated April 22, 2020, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Director has reached out to the Department of Emergency Management and Military Affairs (DEMA) and FEMA Region IX. Both the International Reagent Resource (IRR) and Project Air Bridge are federal programs to expedite resources to state health labs and emergency managers, respectively.

According to its website

The International Reagent Resource (IRR) was established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide [registered users](#) with reagents, tools and information for studying and detection of Influenza Virus. The IRR acquires, authenticates, and produces reagents that scientists need to carry out basic research and develop improved diagnostic tests, vaccines, and detection methods.

Public health labs also use the reagents across the globe for the surveillance of newly emerging strains of Influenza, such as Influenza (H1N1) and (H5N1). By centralizing these functions within the IRR, access to and use of these materials in the scientific and public health community is monitored and quality control of the reagents is assured.

The International Reagent Resource is managed under contract by American Type Culture Collection (ATCC).

State public health labs can access the resources of the IRR by registering on the website, <http://www.internationalreagentresource.org/>. DEMA was not familiar with this resource. The FEMA Region IX liaison to DEMA was familiar with the process but had no incite regarding the Arizona public health laboratories' involvement. In a conversation with Dr. England, he mentioned that the state Department of Health Services (AZDHS) had received five thousand test kits. He believes this might be a shipment from the IRR, though the program's name was not part of the AZDHS discussion. Because Pima County does not operate a public health laboratory, the County cannot take direct advantage of the program. The EOC will work with the Incident Commander to advocate that the state public health laboratories are taking full advantage of the program. Dr. England has already sent an email to AZDHS requesting further supplies from the IRR program. A FEMA fact sheet (Attachment 1) provides further information regarding the program.

C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator  
Re: Follow up to FEMA Advisory memo  
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Project Air Bridge is a FEMA directed program to expedite foreign made personal protective equipment (PPE) to State medical facilities and emergency managers. There is no direct local connection to the program. From the State of Virginia Aviation Department website:

Project Air Bridge was created to reduce the time it takes for U.S. medical supply distributors to receive personal protective equipment and other critical supplies into the country for their respective customers. FEMA covers the cost to fly supplies into the U.S. from overseas factories, reducing shipment time from weeks to days.

Overseas flights arrive at operational hub airports for distribution to hotspots and nationwide locations through regular supply chains. Flight arrivals do not mean supplies will be distributed in the operational hub locations. Per agreements with distributors, 50 percent of supplies on each plane are for customers within the hotspot areas with most critical needs. The remaining 50 percent is fed into distributors' normal supply chain to their customers in other areas nationwide. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and FEMA determine hotspot areas based on CDC data.

Atlas Air operated the first flight under Project Airbridge on March 29 delivering critical medical supplies from Shanghai to JFK International Airport in New York. UPS will manage and broker charter flights under Project Airbridge to transport millions of pounds of PPE. As of April 17, UPS reported that it had added over 200 company-owned and chartered air freighter flights in April to support Project Airbridge and other healthcare-related missions.

DEMA is familiar with and has sought the aid of Project Air Bridge. The State expects to receive about 10 million N95 masks within the next few days, which will be distributed to the counties. Though not mentioned by name, it is likely that these products are being shipped via Project Air Bridge. DEMA is keenly aware of the PPE requirements for Pima County. The EOC (along with other county EOCs) has been vigilant to remind DEMA of our need.

The EOC and the Incident Commander will stay engaged with DEMA, AZDHS, and FEMA Region IX to ensure these programs bring much needed supplies into our community.

JCV

C: Jeff Guthrie, Director, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security  
Louie Valenzuela, Program Manager, Public Health, Health Department

# ATTACHMENT 1

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: International Reagent Resource

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Established by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the International Reagent Resource provides resources for surveillance of and detection of influenza and other respiratory pathogens to laboratories with documented training and competency. The organization acquires, authenticates, and produces reagents that scientists need to carry out basic research and develop improved diagnostic tests, vaccines, and detection methods. The IRR is under contract by American Type Culture Collection (ATCC).

The coronavirus (COVID-19) Federal Interagency Task Force continues to expand items supplied by the IRR to help public health labs access diagnostics supplies and reagents for COVID-19 testing free of charge. Consolidating testing supplies under the IRR simplifies the resource request process for states and territories and alleviates the burden on public health labs, increasing efficiency by reducing the need to work with separate, individual suppliers for swabs, reagents and other diagnostic testing supplies.

- State public health labs should submit open, unfilled requests directly to the IRR.
  - FEMA Regions should cancel such requests for state labs for diagnostic resources with National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)/WebEOC.
- State public health labs must be registered entities with the IRR in order to access its supplies and resources. During this emergency response, additional laboratories may be authorized to access IRR supplies and resources by their state's primary public health laboratory or other qualified public health entity.
- Tribes and other entities will continue procuring lab diagnostic supplies through the commercial market.
- The expanded list of diagnostic supplies will include supplies to support three components needed for COVID-19 testing:
  - **Sample kits**, to swab via the nose and/or throat.
  - **Extraction kits**, to isolate the viral genetic material (RNA); and
  - **Test kits**, to determine the presence of COVID-19.
- To order resources from the IRR, registered public health labs must submit their request for supplies online at [www.InternationalReagentResource.org](http://www.InternationalReagentResource.org). All requests are routed to CDC for review and approval.



## FACT SHEET: COVID-19 INTERNATIONAL REAGENT RESOURCE

- CDC sends approved requests to IRR for processing within 24-48 hours. Those supplies produced by the CDC or encompassed within CDC FDA-approved [Emergency Use Authorization assay](#) will ship from IRR directly, typically within 2-3 business days from order approval. Supplies purchased by IRR from other commercial manufacturers will ship directly from those manufacturers' facilities upon receipt of approved orders from CDC according to their shipping schedule.
- The NRCC continues to provide prioritization guidance to the IRR using epidemiological and testing data.
  - The IRR retains operational latitude to adjust allocations as they apply the NRCC guidance.
- Laboratories are encouraged to order reagents in line with immediate (1 – 1 ½ weeks) testing needs so all states and territories may support testing while commercial inventories are relatively constrained.
  - As commercial manufacturers continue to scale up their production capabilities, IRR anticipates that inventory supplies will expand.
  - For supplies carried by the IRR, public health labs are advised only to submit requests through the IRR.

Visit [www.InternationalReagentResource.org](http://www.InternationalReagentResource.org) to see the full list and specifications for available COVID-19 diagnostics supplies and reagents.