



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 29, 2020

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Example of Delayed Acute Viral PCR Testing Results**

Recently a high-ranking member of County Management had one or more symptoms associated with the coronavirus and chose to self-quarantine. At the same time, this individual received an active viral PCR test from a local health provider where the results were sent to a well-known laboratory. This occurred on Monday, May 18, 2020, almost now two weeks ago. We had anticipated this individual would have received their test results and either continue to self-isolate and receive appropriate medical attention, or return to work. Results were not returned until late Wednesday, May 27, two days after the isolation period had already expired, based on current guidelines.

As the Board recalls and in many and most of my updates to the Board regarding activities related the coronavirus, we indicated one of the pitfalls associated with successful contact tracing was the timely receipt of active viral PCR test results, particularly those that test positive. Ideally, these results would be provided within 24 hours of the test, but no later than 48 hours in order to be effective in assisting the public health agency and contact tracing. The present example of high-level management staff not being able to receive test results until nine days later is an example of either a failed, or an overwhelmed system.

The County public health agency will be providing significant additional active viral PCR testing allowing us to evaluate, isolate and treat individuals with the coronavirus and, more importantly, to conduct appropriate contact tracing to help in isolation of those who may be infected, or have been exposed to the coronavirus.

We anticipate significant additional expenditures in contracting with both the laboratories in providing analysis of this test, as well as suppliers in the acquisition of test kit supplies. We will only contract with and/or use those laboratories that provide timely results to the public health agency in order to facilitate our contact tracing, which is absolutely necessary to be able to contain the spread of this public health threat.

CHH/lab

c: Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Dr. Bob England, Director, Health Department
Dr. Terry Cullen, Appointed Public Health Director