



City and Borough of Juneau
Emergency Operations Center
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DATE: June 29, 2020
TO: Beth Weldon, Mayor
FROM: Robert Barr, EOC Planning Section Chief
RE: Local COVID-19 Testing

Background

Since early May, the EOC has been investigating the viability of standing up a local testing program that would obviate the need to send the majority of our COVID tests out of town for processing. An earlier update was provided at the June 8, 2020 Assembly meeting when Ordinance 2019-06(AI) was introduced.

Objective & Challenges

Adequate COVID testing, with rapidly delivered results, is key to identifying, managing, and controlling spread of the virus. During the course of the pandemic so far, turnaround times have varied from 24 hours to 12+ days. Current turnaround times vary from 48 hours to 3-5 days. A newly stood up commercial lab in Seattle may allow for more consistent turnaround times between 24-48 hours.

A local testing program would provide local control for same or next day test turnaround (depending on when the sample was collected) for up to 300 tests per day, with the ability to grow to approximately 1,000 tests per day in a deteriorating situation. Local control imparts additional benefits around improved logistics, test prioritization, and the ability to provide regional support.

Today, the primary challenges of establishing a local program include:

1. Equipment lead times
2. Operations for sample collection (currently ongoing at Airport and Fire Training Center)
3. Operations for lab analysis
4. Assuring adequate supplies for both collection and analysis
5. A financial plan to pay operating and supply costs. Cost per test will generally fall between \$50-100. 300 tests per day amounts to annual costs of \$5.5 to \$11M.

Next Steps

- The Assembly consider appropriating funds for purchasing equipment and related supplies. All vendors in this space have significant lead times and offer penalty-free cancellation up until the time of shipping should the situation change.
- Establish the role(s) that the State will play in this effort

June 29, 2020

Assembly

Local COVID-19 Testing

- Establish the role(s) that Bartlett and/or other medical providers with laboratory resources in Juneau will play in this effort.
- The Assembly may wish to have an on-going ad hoc committee on testing. Members could include the Mayor, City Manager, Hospital Board Liaison, Board Chair, BRH CEO, and Board physician representative.