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**WITH ONE OF THE BEST VACCINATION RATES IN THE COUNTRY AND**

**LOW POSITIVITY RATES, CONNECTICUT’S MASS TESTING SITES CLOSE**

***Testing will be available at more than 230 locations throughout the state***

HARTFORD, Conn. **–** As Connecticut nears 70 percent of all eligible residents fully vaccinated - one of the best vaccination rates in the country - test positivity rates remain low, and demand for testing decreased as expected. The significant decrease in testing has allowed for the demobilization of the mass testing sites that were a hallmark of Connecticut’s COVID-19 response in 2020. Effective today the sites are closed, the Connecticut Department of Public Health announced.

“In large measure, Connecticut residents have stepped up and gotten vaccinated to protect themselves, their families and their community, which has resulted in low rates of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths and lower testing demand. The State has provided free testing to all Connecticut residents which was the right road to take. As of yesterday, we ended the contracting for testing, and we are grateful to all our health care partners and local health for the support in operating the mass testing sites,” said DPH Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron. “COVID testing will still be available throughout the state, particularly in our high SVI areas, where vaccination rates are lower than the state averages.”

Connecticut residents will still be able to get tested at more than 230 locations throughout the state, including many pharmacies, hospitals and urgent care centers. United Way/211 will maintain a complete list of testing sites on their website, and individuals can call 211 for additional help and information. In addition, DPH anticipates that COVID-19 testing will become increasingly available in primary care provider offices.

Testing will remain free for Connecticut residents. Individuals with health insurance will have their insurance billed, but there will be no co-pays, deductibles or other out-of-pocket costs for anyone seeking a COVID-19 test. Uninsured residents are encouraged to call 211 or visit their website for a list of priority testing sites.

DPH will be prepared for any spikes in demand for testing when or if rates of respiratory illnesses rise in the fall/winter or if the COVID-19 variants become more prevalent and infection rates start to rise in the state. If the need for testing rises, DPH and local health will be able to mobilize testing contractors off a newly created master list of community testing providers.

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