



Better health through
laboratory medicine.

October 5, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) has been conducting a monthly survey since May to assess the testing capabilities of clinical laboratories performing coronavirus testing. We are concerned that many of the supply shortage problems we identified in the spring remain to this day. AACC urges you to work with federal and state agencies, and other stakeholders, to resolve this ongoing issue.

In August, AACC received survey responses from 67 laboratories including commercial/reference laboratories and hospitals/public health laboratories. Unfortunately, 52% of responding laboratories continue to encounter problems obtaining supplies to perform coronavirus diagnostic testing. Their primary obstacle remains an inability to procure test kits, reagents, and swabs.

- **Test kits** – The percentage of laboratories able to get test kits for performing testing has worsened over the past few months. In May, 48% of respondent laboratories stated they were unable to obtain test kits. This figure has increased to 67% for all labs responding in our August report, while exceeding 70% for hospitals.
- **Reagents** – Similarly, testing facilities continue to have trouble getting the reagents they need to perform testing. In May, 54% of laboratories reported this as a significant problem. This figure has increased to 67% in August.
- **Swabs** – While the number of laboratories unable to obtain swabs is still too high, there has been improvement in this area. In May, 62% of the participating laboratories reported a problem in getting swabs. This figure is 31% in our August report.

One area where there has been significant improvement is in the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers. Only 11% of the laboratories reported this as a problem in the current survey compared to 32% in May.

October 5, 2020

Page Two

AACC is alarmed, however, that the number of laboratories that mention they cannot perform all their coronavirus test requests has increased from 21% to almost 30%. We are concerned that unless enough supplies are procured and appropriately allocated our nation will be unable to gain control of this crisis.

AACC believes the federal government must assume a larger role in coordinating these supply chain management activities to facilitate the production and distribution of these much-needed supplies. While we agree that state and local officials must continue to play a central role in this process, there are some things that only the federal government can accomplish.

AACC recommends that Congress work with the federal agencies, healthcare community, and public health officials to develop a clearer, transparent plan for ensuring that officials at the national level are aware of essential medical supply needs of the laboratory community and a distribution process is put in place to ensure supplies are more efficiently produced and allocated to facilities in need.

AACC is a global scientific and medical professional organization dedicated to clinical laboratory science and its application to healthcare. AACC brings together more than 50,000 clinical laboratory professionals, physicians, research scientists, and business leaders from around the world focused on clinical chemistry, molecular diagnostics, mass spectrometry, translational medicine, lab management, and other areas of laboratory science to advance healthcare collaboration, knowledge, expertise, and innovation.

We look forward to working with you on these most important issues. To facilitate these interactions, or if you have any questions, please email Vince Stine, PhD, AACC's Senior Director of Government and Global Affairs, at vstine@aacc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Grenache". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David G. Grenache, PhD, D(ABCC)
President, AACC