

New rapid COVID-19 test available for regional communities

Tuesday, 21 April 2020

COVID testing analysers to be rolled out in regional areas
Faster turn-around-times for some of our most vulnerable people
Further increasing Statewide testing capacity

Faster turn-around-times in regional areas will be available for urgent cases with the introduction of regional on-site testing analysers for COVID-19 - with results available within an hour.

The analysers will provide testing capability to regional areas of most need, further adding to the State's testing capacity.

For the first time, the McGowan Government, through PathWest, is installing molecular PCR analysers in select laboratories outside of Perth - the first of which will be located at PathWest Broome next week, then Kalgoorlie and Geraldton. Feasibility studies are underway for further roll-out to Port Hedland, Albany and Esperance.

The GeneXpert® analysers will be used for higher risk COVID-19 testing scenarios, such as health care workers, police, hospital patients, people living in Aboriginal communities and those from an area with an increased risk of community transmission.

Test results will be provided in a fraction of the time, without having to transport samples to Perth.

The Department of Health, PathWest and the WA Country Health Service are also co-ordinating the rollout of a COVID-19 Remote Point of Care Testing Program announced by the Commonwealth Department of Health last week. These analysers will provide testing in smaller regional and remote communities where no testing facilities are available.

For more information telephone the COVID-19 Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 for advice by visiting <http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/>

Comments attributed to Health Minister Roger Cook:

"Providing quick turnaround times and diagnostic equipment closer to some of the most vulnerable people in the State is essential as we continue to manage this global health crisis.

This is another way we are increasing testing capacity in the system, and forms part of our extensive testing program.

By slowing the spread of the virus, we have been able to better prepare our hospitals and regions as we come into the winter season."

Comments attributed to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Ben Wyatt:

"The introduction of rapid tests into regional areas adds to other protection measures the State Government has implemented for regional Western Australians, including tough travel restrictions into remote communities.

"While the recent low cases numbers have been very promising, I urge people, particularly those from remote communities, don't become complacent.

"Your community is the safest place to be."

Comment attributed to Mining and Pastoral region MLC Kyle McGinn:

"This is a game changer for people in the regions who will now receive their results much sooner than if they required transport to Perth."

Comment attributed to Kimberley MLA Josie Farrer:

"The fast-tracked results are welcomed by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service who have strongly advocated for this in the regions and will make a big difference in helping keep our mob safe."

Health Minister's office - 6552 6500