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## **RENOWN HEALTH'S IN-HOUSE LAB NOW PROCESSING COVID-19 TESTS FOR PATIENTS AND CARE PROVIDERS**

*Expanded test processing capabilities is resulting in faster test results, lessening the load on the state lab, and helping keep patients, care providers and the community safe*

**RENO, Nev. (June 24, 2020)** – Renown Health announced today that its in-house laboratory is now able to process up to 500 COVID-19 tests for hospital patients and care providers each day. The organization has invested in expanded test processing capabilities to better serve the community amid the coronavirus pandemic, and to increase testing available across the state.

Next month, Renown anticipates continuing to further expand testing capacity and doubling its capacity to be able to provide 1,000 tests per day in preparation for the continued response to the pandemic.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is not going away- it is still with us. I am concerned by the number of new cases and hospitalizations we are seeing across northern Nevada. We must do more testing. We need broader capabilities around making sure we have broad-scale surge testing available, so we can help people identify if they have COVID-19 or not,” said Tony Slonim, MD, DrPH, Renown’s President & CEO. “If I could test 60,000 people in northern Nevada for COVID-19, like we did for the Healthy Nevada Project, we could better understand with data and facts the proportion of people who actually have COVID-19 versus those that just have the sniffles and a cold.”

Launched in 2016, the Healthy Nevada Project <https://healthynv.org/> is a community-based population study where free genetic testing is provided to thousands of Nevadans to learn about the health of the community and each person’s genetic risks.

As of Tuesday, 2,286 people in northern Nevada have been tested, and positive cases were nearing 700. Seventy four people in northern Nevada have died; 1,526 have recovered. <https://www.washoecounty.us/health/programs>

Dr. Slonim says it would help him and others make important decisions and plans for coronavirus with evidence. He wants to be able to test many more individuals across northern Nevada.

“Testing is pivotal upstream, so you can prevent consequences downstream,” said Dawn D. Ahner, DSc, FACHE, Chief Operating Officer – Renown Acute Services. “By processing our own tests, we’ve reduced the turnaround to receive results to just 12-24 hours, which will have a profoundly positive impact on our community, and lightens the load on the State lab.

“Testing is an incredibly important tool in our fight against coronavirus,” said Tim Stephens, vice president of ancillary services. “There’s no 100% perfect test, however, the PCR tests are so incredibly sensitive, that when done perfectly, have a very low false-positive rate. Certified labs like Renown’s use a number of procedures to reduce the risk of false test results.”



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“The expansion of our lab’s new testing capabilities during this time is a testament to the innovative and important work being done here at Renown,” said Erik Olson, CEO of Renown Regional Medical Center. “Throughout the pandemic, our ancillary team, which includes services like laboratory, radiology and pharmacy, has been quick to adapt to the needs of our patients and our community. I am pleased that we are able to generate critical test results for patients and providers as we continue the fight against COVID-19 and go the extra mile for safety.”

### **Going the extra mile for safety**

As an added safety measure, acute hospital patients; patients preparing for surgery, and care providers who may have come into contact with those positive for COVID-19, are among those that receive mandatory PCR testing from Renown at this time. For patients receiving hospital care, these tests help determine if patients should be placed in a designated area of the hospital to mitigate the risk of transmission to those not infected. Furthermore, all surgery patients are tested ahead of their surgery and self-quarantine prior to their surgical procedure at Renown Regional Medical Center and Renown South Meadows Medical Center.

### **How do PCR tests work?**

PCR tests use a sample of mucus typically taken from a person's nose or throat. The test looks for the genetic material of the coronavirus, using a technology called PCR to detect if the viral genetic material is present. Those actively infected with the virus will show the existence of that material.

Individuals who think they should be tested for COVID-19 are encouraged to call their medical provider or contact the Washoe County Health District at 775-328-2427 for a risk assessment.

For up-to-date information on Renown’s approach to keeping our community safe, visit our website at [renown.org/covid-19/](https://renown.org/covid-19/).

Please see b-roll for this story [here](#).

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### **About Renown Health**

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region’s largest private employers with a workforce of more than 7,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, Renown Children’s Hospital, Renown Rehabilitation Hospital, the area’s most comprehensive medical group and urgent care network, and the region’s largest and only locally owned not-for-profit insurance company, Hometown Health. Renown has a long tradition and commitment to continually improve the care and the health of our community. For more information, visit [renown.org](https://renown.org).