

Major COVID-19, Antibody Testing Program Announced For Township

Added by [Bill Bowman](#) on July 23, 2020.

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An eight-day COVID-19 testing program was announced during Mayor Phil Kramer's virtual Town Hall on July 23.

With a goal of getting "tens of thousands" of township residents tested for the coronavirus, township officials on July 23 announced a testing program that will run from July 27 through August 7.

The tests will be conducted at various houses of worship in the township, will be free and will not require the person seeking a test to have coronavirus symptoms.

"Our goal is to test at least one person in every household," Mayor Phil Kramer said during a July 23 virtual Town Hall meeting to announce the program. "We'd love to get the entire township. That is our goal and that is what we're going to strive for."

The first tests will be offered from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on July 27 – at St. Matthias Church, 168 John F. Kennedy Blvd. – and July 31, at the former Consolata Mission, 2301 Route 27.

Following that, tests will be given from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on the following dates:

- Aug 1 and 2: First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, 771 Somerset St.
- Aug 4: Kendall Park Baptist Church, 3583 Route 27, Franklin Park.
- Aug 5: The Jain Center of New Jersey, 111 Cedar Grove Lane.
- Aug 6: St Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, 508 Elizabeth Ave.
- Aug 7: Middlebush Reformed Church, 1 South Middlebush Rd.

The township is partnering with members of the Franklin Township Interfaith Council, Mercy International Nurses' Association, Interfaith Urgent Care and the office of Gov. Phil Murphy to deliver the tests.

The tests will be offered for free, although those with insurance are required to show their insurance cards.

"No insurance, no problem," Kramer said. "No money, no problem. No symptoms, no problem. We want to test everyone."

Registration is requested, but not required and walk-ins will be tested. To register, click [here](#).

For more information on the program, email abcovidtesting@gmail.com.

Kramer credited state Assemblyman Joe Danielsen (D-17); Rabbi Abe Friedman, the founder of Interfaith Urgent Care; the Rev. DeForest "Buster" Soaries of First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, and Alex Kharazi, president of the Franklin Interfaith Council, for bringing the testing to the township.

Rabbi Friedman and Rev. Soaries partnered with the office of Gov. Phil Murphy earlier this month to bring two days of testing to the grounds of FBLC on Route 27. Nearly 1,000 people were tested during that time, Rev. Soaries said.

The tests given at First Baptist Church will be saliva tests, the remainder will be the more common swab tests.

People may get tested for both coronavirus and its antibodies, or one or the other, Kramer said.

Kharazi said it was relatively easy to get his member houses of worship to agree to serve as testing sites.

“When we explained to them what we are planning to do, all of them said they are very much interested, and they want to learn more,” he said. “This morning we had a Zoom meeting with a Rabbi who explained the process, and they felt more comfortable.”

“I think when other houses of worship hear how easy it is ... they will come forward,” Kharazi said. “Already a couple of them sent us a note that they would like to participate.”

The effort is being led by Rabbi Friedman and his Interfaith Urgent Care organization.

Friedman said it’s “a true honor and I’m humbled to be a part of this great team.”

Friedman said he was particularly concerned by poor communities and communities of color not getting tested for the virus.

“There are many reasons, some are politically connected, some are just not able to get the test done ins a safe environment,” he said.

Soaries said that he was impressed by what he saw when he visited an earlier testing program run by Rabbi Friedman.

“They had passion and compassion that made it much more than testing,” he said. “They made people feel comfortable in a very uncomfortable situation, they made people feel welcome even though they were strangers, they made people feel empowered because this can be a very stressful moment.”

Kharazi said the township will “set a perfect example for the nation on how a township can come together and test everyone.”