

NIH Launches Home Test to Treat, a Pilot COVID-19 Telehealth Program

Berks County, Pennsylvania, is the first community to join a partnership with local public health departments.

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The National Institutes of Health, in collaboration with the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has launched the Home Test to Treat program, an entirely virtual community health intervention that will provide free COVID-19 health services—at-home rapid tests, telehealth sessions and at-home treatments—in selected communities.

The program, [first announced by the White House](#) in September 2022, will make antiviral treatment available for eligible individuals who receive a positive test result, which could prevent severe illness, hospitalization or death.

“At-home testing for COVID-19 is now widely available in the United States, as are antiviral treatments, and this program combines easy home access to both,” said Bruce Tromberg, PhD, director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) at the National Institutes of Health and leader of the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) Tech program. “The Home Test to Treat program allows those who are sick an alternative to venturing out for testing or treatment, potentially reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the community.”

Later this month, local and state officials in Berks County, Pennsylvania, will be the first to pilot the Home Test to Treat program. Up to 8,000 eligible residents are anticipated to participate in the program.

Program organizers will gather information from participants to identify best practices and make improvements to the Home Test to Treat model that can be used to implement the program on a larger scale. Additional communities across the country will be selected to participate based on level of community need, access to healthcare treatment, expected COVID-19 infection rates and socio-economic factors. Through collaborations with local health departments, Home Test to Treat aims to offer services to approximately 100,000 people across the United States in the coming year.

Telehealth services provider eMed will implement the Home Test to Treat program. Their services

are provided under a contract award by NIBIB contractor, VentureWell. Having administered millions of verified at-home telehealth sessions during the pandemic, eMed will host the user-friendly Home Test to Treat website, where participants can sign up for the program, report symptoms, receive telehealth and antiviral treatment delivery, and coordinate telehealth enabled test kits.

NIBIB also has issued a contract with UMass Chan Medical School, whose researchers, in collaboration with eMed, will analyze data collected from each participating community, including the impacts of a home-based process for testing and treatment, individual attitudes about the Home Test to Treat program, and clinical outcomes from treatments.

HHS, through ASPR, has led a national COVID-19 Test to Treat initiative since March 2022, that includes thousands of treatment access points nationwide. These include CDC's Increasing Community Access to Testing (ICATT) program, composed of federally funded health centers, long-term care facilities and community-based sites. Participants in the Home Test to Treat program can be tested at local ICATT centers. The Test to Treat initiative has evolved to include more mobile and telehealth-based models that reduce barriers to access for the highest-risk individuals. NIH's Home Test to treat program will provide an important additional pathway to rapidly access lifesaving treatments for COVID-19 in vulnerable communities.

Home Test to Treat will promote equitable solutions and help to identify best practices that may save lives in this and future pandemics. In each community, the research team will identify and implement improvements that leave us in a much better position to respond to specific needs at the local, state and federal levels.

The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) has supported development of Home Test to Treat through the RADx Tech program.

About the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative: The RADx initiative was launched on April 29, 2020, to speed innovation in the development, commercialization, and implementation of technologies for COVID-19 testing. The initiative has four programs: RADx Tech, RADx Advanced Technology Platforms, RADx Underserved Populations and RADx Radical. It leverages the existing NIH Point-of-Care Technology Research Network. The RADx initiative partners with federal agencies, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health, Department of Defense, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Learn more about the RADx initiative and its programs: <https://www.nih.gov/radx>.

This [news release](#) was originally published by the National Institutes of Health on January 5, 2023.