



Joanne Belanger  
*Director of Health and Human Services*

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EJD*

**FROM:** Joanne Belanger, Director of Health and Human Services

**DATE:** May 12, 2020

**SUBJECT:** National Guard Testing at Nursing Homes (**Motion by C.Conway, 4/28/20** Req. City Mgr. Reach Out To Lowell Nursing Home Administrators And The Board Of Health To Discuss The “Merits” Of Asking The National Guard To Provide Covid-19 Test Kits To Each Nursing Home In The Greater Lowell Area For All Their Residents And Staff)

Nursing homes, Assisted Living Facilities and Rest Homes were offered 2 options through the State to get their residents and staff tested for COVID 19. They could, if they had the staff to support it, have the swabs and testing materials sent directly to the facility from the State. The onsite staff would collect the samples and send them to the State Public Health Laboratory to process the test. The results would be communicated back to the ordering provider for the facility. The other option was partnership with the Massachusetts National Guard and/or Fallon.

Trained personnel from the Massachusetts National Guard or Fallon Emergency Medical Service, as a state-contracted EMS provider, would collect samples from residents and transported them directly to State Lab, which works with the Broad Institute to prioritize these samples for testing. Facilities that wanted testing through this method, made the request directly by contacting the State. All residents and employees, symptomatic or asymptomatic are eligible to be tested. The facility may request further testing for symptomatic individuals on an ongoing basis.

Tests requested via this program (whether by facility personnel or National Guard) will be paid for by the State. All results will be communicated back with the ordering provider listed on the requisition form.

In Lowell, as of May 7, we know of 4 facilities who requested assistance through the State from the National Guard; Northwood, Fairhaven, D’Youville and Care One (which utilized National Guard testing twice).