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## NEWS

# FSU's College of Medicine to take over drive-through COVID-19 testing on campus

**Byron Dobson** Tallahassee Democrat

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More than 2,000 employees have been tested at Florida State University's drive-through COVID-19 site since it opened June 24 in the Traditions parking garage on campus.

The drive-through site, operated by FSU's University Health Services, has been averaging about 300 tests daily, with the capacity to handle up to 400. Capital Regional Medical Center – and its lab partner, Integrated Regional Laboratories – is running the tests on behalf of FSU.

Beginning Monday, FSU's College of Medicine will take over for University Health Services at the garage site. The university plans for testing to be available through the fall semester at different locations on campus.

The on-site testing is not mandatory, but FSU “strongly encourages” employees to take advantage of the site before returning to campus. The university expects employees to have costs for testing covered by their individual insurance plans. It will cover costs for employee who do not have health insurance.

The on-site COVID-19 operation is a priority for the university and included in its reopening plan for the fall which was approved by the Board of Governors. The university is not providing details on the number of tests coming back positive.

Employees who do test positive, either with University-provided testing or external testing, are required to immediately notify the Office of Human Resources.

“We have set an aspirational goal to have all faculty and staff tested before they return to campus, and we are very encouraged that our COVID-19 testing site has been so well-

received,” FSU President John Thrasher said in an email to the Tallahassee Democrat. “Testing is one of the best ways to support a safer and healthier environment for everyone as we move forward with our plans for the fall semester.”

Thrasher was the first to get tested on June 24.

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Testing is being conducted using nasal swabs, but Amy Magnuson, director of University Health Services, said the school “may need to be flexible based upon testing supply resources. The nasal swab test currently being performed is less invasive than the original version.”

Results are expected within 72 hours by telephone, text message, email, electronic portal or letter. Employees also may view their results on a University Health Center website.

“We are proud of our streamlined process and how quickly and easily FSU employees are able to drive in, get tested and drive out,” she said. “A large percentage of our faculty and staff have already taken advantage of this service, and we've received very positive feedback.”

While the Tradition site is for employees, COVID-19 testing is available for students at the campus health center. Since March, 468 students have been tested. There will be additional options for student testing in the next few weeks as the Aug. 24 start date for the fall semester approaches, Magnuson said.

“Priority is given to any students who have symptoms or who have had direct contact with individuals diagnosed with COVID-19), as well as students involved in activities where they are unable to follow social distancing guidelines,” she said.

In the meantime, FSU is partnering with Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare to open a laboratory in Innovation Park that is expected to be in operation later this month or early August.

There, technicians will be able to process specimens for positive or negative COVID-19 results, but tests will not be collected there. The university expects to initially process up to 2,000 tests per week and report results in eight to 24 hours.

The facility is designed to easily scale up to process 5,000 tests per week, should that be necessary, the university said.

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