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Press Release

May 18, 2020

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Expands Antibody Testing Program at Lab Sites and Work Locations

*Agency Partnering with Northwell Health and BioReference Laboratories to Offer More Availability for Employees*

*Program is Part of Governor's Initiative to Ensure That Essential Employees Across State Receive Testing*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that it has expanded its partnership with Northwell Health-GoHealth and BioReference Laboratories to provide antibody testing for all MTA employees throughout the New York metropolitan region at no cost. The antibody testing provides MTA and New York State health authorities with a better estimate of the overall infection rate, which will help inform public health recommendations and the broader strategy for reopening New York.

Beginning Monday, May 18, MTA employees will be able to get tested at no cost to them at 52 Northwell Health-GoHealth Urgent Care facilities in the New York metropolitan region. Northwell Health-GoHealth facilities are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends.

BioReference Laboratories, which has already tested approximately 7,800 employees since April 29 at various MTA locations, will continue to test employees at a number of MTA locations. Information has been provided to employees on how to register for the tests.

"Antibody testing is a critical tool for providing important health information to our employees and helping workers safely return to work in large numbers," **said MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye**. "We are moving quickly and strategically to make sure our employees are able to get tested, and are hopeful that, in time, this will help bolster the number of healthy workers who are able to move the essential workers in the fight against this pandemic."

Priority will be given to employees designated as essential and performing critical operational roles. Participation in the program is voluntary and the tests will be provided at no cost to employees.

Individuals currently exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms (e.g. temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, dry cough, shortness of breath, etc.) cannot receive antibody testing. The antibody test provides the most accurate results when done 21 to 28 days after exposure to COVID-19. This is the time the body needs to make antibodies in the blood after exposure to the disease. All other asymptomatic employees who have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 are eligible for testing.

"It's imperative that we provide this critical testing to our frontline heroes and the local communities that have been hardest hit by this pandemic," **said Dwayne Breining, MD, Executive Director, Northwell Health Labs**. "We now have the capacity to handle thousands of antibody tests per day. This testing provides quick and reliable testing results which are crucial to understanding how the virus has spread and will be critical to opening up our economy."

"The MTA provides unwavering support to millions of New Yorkers each day and plays a central role in New York City's transportation model," **said Jon R. Cohen, M.D., Executive Chairman of BioReference Laboratories**. "Supporting the frontline, essential employees of the MTA is a privilege for us. We commend Governor Cuomo for choosing to utilize COVID-19 antibody testing as a tool to assist in providing valuable information about who has been infected and who may potentially be immune from re-infection."

The MTA has been a national leader among transportation agencies in taking aggressive action to battle the COVID-19 pandemic since the early days of its arrival in New York. The organization has distributed millions of pieces of personal protective equipment, including more than four million pairs of gloves and nearly two million masks, since March 1. In order to protect employees, the MTA also disregarded federal guidance and began handing out masks to all employees before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention later issued new guidance recommending all Americans wear masks.

The MTA continues its comprehensive disinfecting efforts throughout its entire rolling stock, including poles, seating, floor, ceiling, doors and walls. Every car in passenger service is disinfected at least every 24 hours. The MTA has also implemented rear-door boarding and eliminated cash transactions to prevent person-to-person contact to ensure the safety of operating employees.

The MTA launched the nation-leading "Temperature Brigade" on March 24 and later expanded the force to 70 locations conducting nearly 150,000 temperature checks to date across New York City Transit, Metro-North Railroad, the Long Island Rail Road and MTA Bridges and Tunnels. The MTA has also installed plexiglass barriers at work locations across subway facilities and all 28 bus depots to further protect employees. The MTA is also installing plastic sheeting across 1,600 buses as it continues to explore a permanent solution. The health and safety of the MTA's employees and customers continues to be the agency's top priority.

