



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 16, 2020

### **County of Ventura Works with Community Partners to Bring Antibody Tests to Region**

VENTURA, Calif. – Since the outbreak of COVID-19 the County of Ventura has been actively working with community partners to obtain antibody tests. There is a race throughout the nation to acquire point-of-care COVID-19 antibody tests. Antibody testing, which is also often called serologic testing or immunity testing, can reveal whether a person’s immune system has mounted a response to the virus.

“We want antibody testing for our community to give us a better understanding of who may have been infected at some point,” said Doctor Robert Levin, Public Health Officer. “It will help us understand the level of protection in our community.”

There are two different types of tests for COVID-19. One is a nasal swab test currently available in Ventura County that can detect whether a person currently has the virus that causes COVID-19. The other is an antibody blood test that is not presently available in Ventura County, which can detect whether a person has previously had the virus that causes COVID-19.

“We are eager to get a reliable antibody test to know if large numbers of community residents previously had the virus,” said Doctor Levin. “Antibody tests can reveal who is immune to a disease, but they can also determine how widely it has spread and how deadly it is. When tests are found to be effective and reliable, they will be more widely available and utilized in the County reopening efforts.”

The County of Ventura, Office of the CEO, Public Health Officer, Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, Ventura County Medical Center Leadership, Ventura County Office of Emergency Services, Dr. Fearn with 11 Health & Technologies, the Economic Development Collaborative, Women’s Economic Venture, Haas Automation, Inc, Alaska Airlines, Angel Flight, Aera Energy, Amgen, and many others have been working in partnership to bring these needed tests to Ventura County.

“I’m proud of our Ventura County community leaders who have come together to meet the challenge of antibody testing head on. Within hours of my first call to the Ventura County Community Foundation, we had volunteers from the public and private sectors working toward making this a reality. I am grateful for the efforts being made by VCCF, Matter Labs, and our amazing County team who are leading us in the fight against COVID-19. Over the course of the past month, through extensive research and planning, we have gained a better understanding about the complexities of selecting the appropriate test and methodology. I am confident that with all of the talent and hard work being done in Ventura County we will be among the first in the nation to test its residents,” said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin.



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“The leadership and collaboration I have witnessed during this unprecedented and very challenging time fills me with hope and confidence for our future in Ventura County,” said Vanessa Bechtel, President and CEO of Ventura County Community Foundation. “One of the most impressive aspects about our community is the spirit of togetherness and the ability for shared participation in making the impossible happen. This effort has been a joint one, bringing together both public and private partnerships. We see each other as one team in Ventura County, doing everything possible to help protect and serve all residents in our community, and it is that united front that will ensure our collective resiliency,” she added.

“In times of crisis we see our true character, and it has been humbling to see firsthand the vision, leadership and cooperation across industry, academia, government, and non-profit sectors. We have been honored to help where we can and are inspired to see what we can accomplish when we all come together for one purpose,” said Erik Went of Matter Labs. “We want to do anything in our power to support the brave men and women on the front line who are working tirelessly to protect our community. They have our eternal gratitude,” he added.

“Our County has faced so much, and here is one more challenge. But what makes us special is the strength and compassion of our community, how deeply we care about each other. Because of that resilience and spirit of community and the wonderful partnerships we have, I know Ventura County will get through this and emerge stronger than ever. Antibody tests will be vital in our road to reopening,” said Mike Powers, County of Ventura CEO.

For updates on COVID-19 please visit [www.vcemergency.com](http://www.vcemergency.com).