



Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp, DrPH  
Director

Kenneth Bird, MD, MPH  
Health Officer

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### County Opens Mobile COVID-19 Specimen Collection Sites

MERCED COUNTY, CA – In an effort to streamline testing capabilities, the Merced County Department of Public Health (Public Health) in collaboration with the Merced County Emergency Operation Center and many county partners, will open two Mobile Specimen Collection sites for COVID-19 (novel coronavirus).

Initially, there will be two collection days per week, one on the westside of the County, and one on the eastside of the County. Each site will remain open for four hours per day. Additional hours per day and days per week may become more frequent if supply and personnel availability increase.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Use of these mobile specimen collection sites are by appointment only, and you must have a prescription from a physician. If you do not have a provider and have symptoms call 209-381-1180 for a phone consultation. Anyone without prior approval will not be tested. Locations will be provided to clients once appointments are made. Call 209-381-1180 for more information.

“This is a huge victory for the residents of Merced County,” said Public Health Director Dr. Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp. “Being able to offer these Mobile Specimen Collection sites will help ensure a more accurate depiction of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting Merced County. These numbers will help us better prepare additional preventative strategies.”

This Mobile Specimen Collection service is available to individuals who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, are not currently hospitalized, and whose medical providers do not offer specimen collection services. A physician’s referral and prior approval from Public Health is required to utilize the Mobile Specimen Collection service. All mobile specimen collections are scheduled by appointment only and walk-ins will not be accepted.

Specimen collection appointments will be tiered based on severity of symptoms and additional risk factors, such as: membership in a vulnerable and high-risk population, exposure history from contact with a COVID-19 positive patient, or travel to a community with widespread COVID-19. Individuals who do not display symptoms will not be tested, to conserve supplies for individuals with higher risk.

For general information pertaining to COVID-19, please contact Public Health’s COVID-19 Information Line at 209-381-1180 (English, Spanish, Hmong) or visit our website at [www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus](http://www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus)

To schedule a phone interview, please contact the Public Health Communication Office from Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. at 209-381-1187.

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