

**Testimony of Scott Jeffers, Vice President of Corporate Enterprise Operations, Quest Diagnostics**

**Joint Hearing – Health and Human Services Committee and Local Government Committee**

**May 4, 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this joint Committee. My name is Scott Jeffers, and I am the Vice President of Corporate Enterprise Operations at Quest Diagnostics. In this role, I have had the privilege of overseeing multiple aspects of our lab operations as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the leading provider of diagnostic information services, Quest is at the forefront of response to COVID-19, providing greater than 20% of COVID-19 lab tests nationally. Before I go any further, I want to take a moment to thank my 47,000 colleagues who are working tirelessly every day to make COVID-19 testing available to our nation; particularly those working on the front lines like our lab professionals, phlebotomists, and transportation professionals.

Quest Diagnostics is proud of its presence in and commitment to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which includes over 2,600 employees, four laboratories, and approximately 1.8 million patient encounters annually. We are also extremely proud of the work we have done in Pennsylvania related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 4, 2020, Vice-President Pence and the Coronavirus Task Force charged the clinical lab industry with launching testing to detect COVID-19. As we have done before in times of national crisis, Quest Diagnostics answered the call to action and launched our first lab-developed COVID-19 molecular test on Monday, March 9 following FDA guidance issued on February 29, which was an essential regulatory measure for enabling lab companies to expedite providing COVID-19 testing for patient care. At that time, demand was pent up and subsequently overwhelming, and our team worked around the clock to expand testing capacity.

Since that time we have dramatically increased capacity by launching our lab-developed test in two more labs, by integrating into several labs across the country a high-throughput test platform developed by Roche, and by adding the Hologic Panther-Fusion platform into two labs. Today, I am happy to report that we are performing COVID-19 testing through a national network of over a dozen laboratories that collectively have capacity to perform over 50,000 COVID-19 molecular tests per day or approximately 350,000 per week for providers and patients across the United States with a turnaround time of 1-2 days on average. I am proud to say that one of the labs performing COVID-19 molecular tests is in Pittsburgh. However, it's important to note that testing is not allocated on a state by state basis; instead our robust logistical network, including our own fleet of airplanes and cars, allows us to leverage our national network to remain focused on the pandemic and support the entire country. This has allowed us to perform over 1.3 million tests nationwide, and we are working on ways to expand.

In the Commonwealth, we have continued our long tradition of partnership with key health systems to deliver high-quality diagnostic services to Pennsylvanians, including Geisinger, Wellspan, Mainline Health, Jefferson Health, Allegheny Health System, and UPMC. We are performing testing statewide, from a retirement community in Montgomery County to FQHCs in Eastern Pennsylvania to urgent care facilities around the Commonwealth. To date, we have provided approximately 95,000 COVID-19 molecular test results in Pennsylvania.

On April 21, Quest Diagnostics entered the next phase of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic by rolling out our antibody test, which may indicate that a person has been exposed to the virus and may mean that person has mounted an immune response. We are currently able to conduct more than 150,000 antibody tests per day in over 20 labs across the country with a turnaround time of about 1-2 days on average. We expect to build this capacity even further.

Quest has initially launched a test to detect IgG antibodies, which are generally detectable in blood several days after initial infection. We have ensured that the tests we offer are highly specific, meaning there is a low probability the test is identifying other viruses instead of COVID-19, and have been validated for accuracy. Although antibody tests should not be used to detect COVID-19, they can be used in a variety of other ways, including helping to determine the number of individuals who have actually been infected, to identify frontline health care and other essential workers who have been exposed to the virus, to identify individuals who may be sources of convalescent plasma - an investigational therapy for severely ill COVID-19 patients - and as a component in the development of a vaccine. In addition, we expect this test may provide insights into herd immunity and resumption of return to work strategies as our society and economy aims to reopen.

We are proud to be playing such a critical role in this moment in history. Like all of you, we look forward to a day when COVID-19 is just a memory. Until then, states like Pennsylvania will continue to refine your COVID-19 testing strategies, and we know that you will need the clinical lab industry to be there for you. Our ramp-up and ongoing work to provide these crucial tests has required and will continue to require substantial investment of resources and personnel, but our team at Quest and our industry understand the need for us to serve, and we have not hesitated. Whether it is supporting drive-thru collection sites; performing testing for high-risk populations like nursing homes, FQHCs, and correctional facilities; or servicing the thousands of health systems, providers, and patients that rely on us every day, we will continue working 24/7 to ensure that we can provide access to high-quality COVID-19 molecular and antibody testing to the Commonwealth and our nation.

On behalf of Quest Diagnostics, thank you again for the opportunity to be here today.