

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2020

Clayton Chau  
Director  
Orange County Health Care Agency  
405 West 5th Street  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Director Chau,

We write today with concerns regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing disparities between Orange County and other counties. Because research has shown that a significant portion of individuals with COVID-19 are asymptomatic,<sup>1</sup> widespread testing will be especially critical to quickly identify and contain small outbreaks and strengthen public confidence as the state gradually relaxes its stay-at-home order.

As of May 11, 2020, approximately 52,982 tests had been conducted in Orange County.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, San Diego County, which has a similar population size, had conducted 82,116.<sup>3</sup> Riverside County, whose population is one-third smaller, had conducted 73,149.<sup>4</sup>

We request a briefing to understand the factors contributing to Orange County's comparably low testing volume so that we may work together to address this disparity. Specifically, we request that you address the following questions during the briefing:

1. What public and private laboratories are conducting COVID-19 testing for Orange County residents? For each laboratory, please provide average daily PCR testing volumes, serology testing volumes, PCR testing capacity, and serology testing capacity. Please also provide average turnaround times and the platforms they are using.
2. If testing volumes are lower than capacity at any of these laboratories, what steps are you taking to increase utilization? In particular, how are you encouraging health professionals

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, *Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html#studies>

<sup>2</sup> Orange County Health Care Agency, *COVID-19 Case Counts and Testing Figures*. <https://occcovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc>

<sup>3</sup> County of San Diego, *COVID-19 Tests by Date Reported*. <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/COVID-19%20Tests%20in%20San%20Diego%20County%20by%20Date%20Reported.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Riverside County Department of Public Health, *Riverside County COVID-19 Cases*. <https://www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus>

to expand sample collection in accordance with guidance from the California Department of Public Health?

3. We have heard reports that some Orange County laboratories are not reporting test results on a daily basis. Please provide more detail, including laboratory names and your efforts to rectify this.
4. Have you spoken with other local public health agencies to exchange best practices to increase testing volumes, and if so, how have you leveraged this information?
5. How many swabs, viral transport media, collection tubes, biohazard bags, or other testing supplies have you requested from the state? How many have you received?
6. What individuals and offices within the county are currently responsible for ensuring testing supplies and policies meet demand?

All levels of government must pursue the greatest testing volume possible, and we stand ready to assist with any federal resources needed to support your work. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request and for your efforts to protect the health of all Orange County residents.

Sincerely,



MIKE LEVIN  
Member of Congress



GILBERT R. CISNEROS JR.  
Member of Congress



ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress



J. LUIS CORREA  
Member of Congress



LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ  
Member of Congress



KATIE PORTER  
Member of Congress



HARLEY ROUDA  
Member of Congress

CC: Chair Michelle Steel, Second District, Orange County Board of Supervisors  
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