

## UCSF Offering Free COVID-19 Test Analysis, Results to Public Health Departments of All 58 California Counties

Departments Can Send Samples for Analysis to UCSF Lab Supported by CZ Biohub, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

By Pete Farley <sup>[1]</sup>

UC San Francisco scientists are offering free sample analysis and test results, indefinitely, to all 58 county departments of public health in California. The effort will empower communities statewide to initiate testing programs over the coming weeks and months, and is already having an impact. The initiative has been made possible by the recent expansion of UCSF's COVID-19 test processing capacity to a new UCSF diagnostic laboratory adjacent to the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub (CZ Biohub).

The work is part of UCSF's long history of close collaboration with the city of San Francisco and the state of California to address public health crises.

The new UCSF lab, launched last month with the support of CZ Biohub and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI), tested its first samples from COVID-19 patients on March 20, and is now capable of processing more than 2,600 samples per day, returning results in as little as 24 hours. The additional testing capacity, made possible by the new CZ Biohub-supported expansion lab <sup>[2]</sup>, has effectively doubled UCSF's overall testing capacity.

The service is also supporting UCSF population research studies related to COVID in our local communities. Two separate research projects recently launched <sup>[3]</sup>, one that is near completion in rural Bolinas, in Marin County, the other in a more densely populated area in the Mission District of San Francisco, which is one of several areas in the city with a high number of COVID-19 cases.

The scientists leading these two different studies have extensive collective expertise conducting large, community-based studies of HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis, including in especially vulnerable populations.

"All the pieces are in place for us to provide the critical testing capacity needed for every California county's Department of Public Health," said CZ Biohub co-President Joe DeRisi <sup>[4]</sup>, PhD, also a professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics at UCSF, who was instrumental in launching the new diagnostic lab. DeRisi contributed to the identification of the SARS coronavirus in 2003.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to offer this service to all county departments of public

health across California," said UCSF Chancellor Sam Hawgood [5], MBBS. "UCSF's mission is to advance public health, and the analysis of tests statewide will allow us to support this goal, focusing on the needs of Californians, including the most vulnerable in our communities."

The ability to offer sample analysis and test results free of charge is made possible by philanthropic support for the lab from CZI, founded by Priscilla Chan, MD, and Mark Zuckerberg in 2015. CZI had already been funding UCSF testing analysis for public health agencies: on April 7, UCSF announced that the new lab supported by CZI and the CZ Biohub would offer COVID-19 sample analysis to all nine Bay Area counties' departments of public health [6].

UCSF's new lab was also enabled by an executive order from California Gov. Gavin Newsom that provides flexibility in some state regulations governing how diagnostic laboratories are staffed. After the governor's order, UCSF and the CZ Biohub were able to rapidly build out the lab from scratch with the help of hundreds of UCSF graduate student and staff volunteers, and to acquire the first test results from patient samples within just eight days.

"We're proud to support the expansion of testing capacity throughout all of California by partnering with Governor Newsom and UC San Francisco," said Chan Zuckerberg Initiative co-founder and co-CEO Priscilla Chan, MD. "One of the goals of the CZ Biohub was to bring together scientists and engineers and give them the flexibility and runway to move fast. This a heartening example of what's possible with collaboration, quick action, and everyone working towards the same goal of lessening the spread of coronavirus."

The CZ Biohub-supported COVID-19 testing lab expansion was launched through a close partnership with the UCSF Clinical Microbiology Laboratory, led by Senior Medical Director Ed Thornborrow [7], MD, PhD; Director Steve Miller [8], MD, PhD; and Associate Director Charles Chiu [9], MD, PhD.

"Expanding testing capabilities continues to be one of our top priorities to combat the pandemic in California," said Gov. Newsom. "The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and CZ Biohub, in conjunction with the University of California, San Francisco, are doing great work to ensure California is meeting the testing goals set by our state's Testing Task Force, and we're grateful and appreciative of their continued partnership."

*About UCSF: The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) is exclusively focused on the health sciences and is dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. UCSF Health [10], which serves as UCSF's primary academic medical center, includes top-ranked specialty hospitals [11] and other clinical programs, and has affiliations throughout the Bay Area.*

*About the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative: Founded by Dr. Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg in 2015, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) is a new kind of philanthropy that's leveraging technology to help solve some of the world's toughest challenges - from eradicating disease, to improving education, to reforming the criminal justice system. Across three core Initiative focus areas of Science, Education, and Justice & Opportunity, we're pairing engineering with grant-making, impact investing, and policy and advocacy work to help build an inclusive, just and healthy future for everyone. For more information, please visit [chanzuckerberg.com](https://chanzuckerberg.com) [12].*

*About the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub: The Chan Zuckerberg Biohub is a nonprofit research organization setting the standard for collaborative science, where leaders in science and technology come together to drive discovery and support the bold vision to cure, prevent or*

*manage disease in our children's lifetime. The CZ Biohub seeks to understand the fundamental mechanisms underlying disease and to develop new technologies that will lead to actionable diagnostics and effective therapies. The CZ Biohub is a regional research endeavor with international reach, where the Bay Area's leading institutions ? the University of California, Berkeley, Stanford University and the University of California, San Francisco ? join forces with the CZ Biohub's innovative internal team to catalyze impact, benefitting people and partnerships around the world. To learn more, visit [CZBiohub.org](https://www.czbiohub.org)<sup>[13]</sup>.*

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**Links**

[1] <https://www.ucsf.edu/bio/pete-farley>

[2] <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/03/416936/statement-ucsf-healths-drive-increase-testing-capacity-coronavirus>

[3] <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/04/417206/covid-19-testing-mission-district-bolinas-inform-next-steps-fight-against>

[4] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/joe.derisi>

[5] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/sam.hawgood>

[6] <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/04/417096/ucsf-offer-free-covid-19-test-analysis-results-public-health-departments-nine>

[7] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/ed.thornborrow>

[8] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/steve.miller>

[9] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/charles.chiu>

[10] <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/>

[11] <https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/area/ca/ucsf-medical-center-6930043>

[12] <https://chanzuckerberg.com/>

[13] <https://www.czbiohub.org/>

[14] <https://womenshealth.ucsf.edu/subsite/coe>

[15] <https://womenshealth.ucsf.edu/category-coe/community>