



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### UTEP to Use University Labs for City Coronavirus Testing

#### PHOTOS AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)

EL PASO, Texas – A new agreement between The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), the City of El Paso and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) will enable UTEP to help the city Department of Public Health with COVID-19 testing.

At the city's request, UTEP purchased FDA-approved equipment that has been set up, calibrated and tested, and is ready to process COVID-19 tests. The equipment can process about 500 COVID-19 samples in an eight-hour day. It will give the city more capacity to assess samples overnight and get results to patients quickly.

“The city asked us if we could help with COVID-19 testing. With the addition of some new equipment that arrived this month, we believe we can safely do so,” UTEP President Heather Wilson said. “UTEP does research on genetics and infectious diseases. We can get a lot more samples evaluated in a day by using our labs.”

Members of the UTEP faculty and staff who are trained in nucleic acid extraction and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) methods will help the public health department's staff analyze patient samples for COVID-19 in UTEP's Bioscience Research Building.

After the samples have been analyzed, the results will be sent to the health care provider to notify the patient.

“This agreement with UTEP will allow us to expand our testing capacity, ultimately helping us reach our goal of testing a minimum of 5% of our population,” Mayor Dee Margo said. “This collaboration is a great example of how our community can come together as one to overcome a catastrophe, and I am grateful to Dr. Wilson for this partnership to address a critical public health need for our community.”

The partnership also includes TTUHSC El Paso, whose Pathology Department Chair serves as the medical doctor overseeing the city lab.

“Since we first began to experience the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in our region, the priorities of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso have remained focused on helping to save lives in the community in any way we can,” said Richard Lange, M.D., president of TTUHSC El Paso. “By extending our resources and uniting with UTEP and the City of El Paso, we hope to put families in our community at ease during this uncertain time.”

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