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Students, Faculty Lead SHIELD COVID Testing on Campus

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Students, Faculty Lead SHIELD COVID Testing on Campus



Thanks to the innovation and teamwork of Governors State University faculty and students in the [College of Health and Human Services](#), Jaguars now have expanded access to one of the most important tools in the fight against COVID-19.

University of Illinois (UI) SHIELD testing is now available on campus multiple days and times every week, announced GSU President Dr. Cheryl Green at her recent investiture ceremony.

“The ability to stand up a sample collection site with the University of Illinois SHIELD COVID-19 program has been an enormous undertaking, and Dean Catherine Balthazar

has been leading this project with incredible support from across the university,” Green said.

“This symbolizes who we are at GSU. We take an issue that confronts all of us and we use our scholarship, our commitment to service, and our dedication and love for our students to find solutions to that problem.”

Since early this past summer, the university has been offering on-campus testing a few hours each week with support from UI SHIELD’s mobile team. However, recent demand for testing has skyrocketed because of Governor JB Pritzker’s executive order mandating that unvaccinated university employees and students be tested weekly.

Test providers are overwhelmed by the surge in demand, and regular, convenient opportunities for testing in the immediate area are extremely limited. GSU found that creating its own collection site was the best option for the campus community. While offering expanded access to testing, the site also will allow GSU health professions students to gain practical experience working with the public.

“The only way to expand access on our campus was to stand up our own UI SHIELD collection site,” explained Balthazar, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services. “It is a perfect opportunity for our faculty and students in the health professions to fill a health care need in the community, while gaining valuable real-world experience.”

Facts About the UI SHIELD Saliva Test



The UI SHIELD COVID-19 test is a fast, easy, and accurate way to detect all variants of the coronavirus that is causing worldwide devastation and disruption. To take the test,

GSU students and employees simply register and book an appointment through an [Online Portal](#).

When they arrive at the test site, currently located in the Hall of Honors, individuals will sign in and receive a plastic vial. This container will collect a small amount of their saliva to be tested—a more comfortable option than a nasal swab test. The samples collected at GSU are delivered to one of UI SHIELD's labs for processing.

"It's great not to have to do the nasal swab," said one participant. "I used to dread my weekly testing because the swab was so uncomfortable."

The SHIELD test is non-invasive and the results are provided quickly. Within 24 hours, participants receive an email notifying them to login to the SHIELD patient portal to view their test results.

Prevention, mitigation and detection work together

Significantly stopping the spread of COVID-19 requires a high rate of vaccination among the broader population. Mitigations like wearing a mask, frequent hand-washing, and social distancing also slow the spread.

While prevention and self-detection of symptoms are important, Balthazar offered a reminder that COVID-19 infection and transmission potential aren't always obvious. This factor is what makes regular testing a crucial element to reducing the virus' spread on campus and beyond.

"We know that both vaccinated and unvaccinated people can contract COVID-19 and not show any noticeable symptoms," Balthazar said. "Detection of the disease through testing is important so that we can isolate and care for people early, to limit the spread."

COVID-19 testing is currently available for GSU students, faculty and staff in the Hall of Honors Mondays through Saturdays. A new temporary structure on University Drive will be opening later this month, along with revised hours. Find up-to-date information on hours and locations, as well as detailed instructions about access, at www.govst.edu/covid-19 under "On Campus SHIELD Illinois COVID-19 Testing."