

# OTTAWA COVID-19 TESTING TASKFORCE

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Mayor Watson  
Councillor Mathieu Fleury  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor Watson and Councillor Fleury,

CC: Keith Egli, Chair of Board of Health, and Steve Kanellakos, City Manager, City of Ottawa

## **Re: COVID-19 Response in the Vanier Community**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Ottawa COVID-19 Testing Taskforce have engaged in targeted outreach and community-based testing for high needs residents and underserved communities. The Vanier and Overbrook community is one such location within our city that has been identified as needing local testing combined with wrap-around social supports.

Beginning Tuesday, December 1, a temporary COVID-19 testing site opened at the Vanier Community Services Centre (Centre Francophone). Unlike other assessment centres in Ottawa, Vanier's testing site is intended to mobilize supports around high needs residents and underserved communities. This response in the Vanier community extends well beyond testing-only to include access to other social supports including food, housing and health education.

This temporary testing site serves residents who face barriers accessing other testing locations. Residents who meet the testing criteria and who don't have a car, experience language barriers, or who need additional supports to self-isolate are encouraged to book an appointment by calling 613-288-5353. The site is open at 270 Marier Avenue on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Residents who do not experience similar barriers are encouraged to access Ottawa's other testing sites by booking an appointment on Ottawa Public Health's website.

Vanier's testing site is a collaboration between the Ottawa Health Team - Équipe Santé Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health, the City of Ottawa, Hôpital Montfort and a number of additional community partners. Our approach is to engage with communities in a way that builds connections such as partnering with trusted community leaders, directly knocking on doors, and getting the message out through community channels and in several languages.

As leaders in the Vanier community, the Taskforce is asking for your support to help get this important message out to residents. We have prepared messaging to encourage COVID-19 testing in Vanier and our hope is that these can be shared in your conversations with constituents.

Keeping our community safe is a collective effort and we would like to thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our city's health and well-being.

Sincerely,

The Ottawa COVID-19 Testing Taskforce

## Ottawa COVID-19 Testing Taskforce members

- CHEO
- City of Ottawa, Office of Emergency Management
- Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory Association (EORLA)
- Hôpital Montfort
- Kids Come First Health Team
- Ottawa Community Health Centres
- Ottawa Health Team - Équipe Santé Ottawa
- Ottawa Public Health
- Public Health Ontario Laboratory (PHOL)
- Queensway Carleton Hospital
- The Ottawa Hospital

## Appendix A: Messaging to Encourage COVID-19 Testing in the Vanier Community

**The many agencies and organizations that form the Ottawa COVID-19 Testing Taskforce are working closely together in the response to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.**

- This includes community health and resource centres, the Ottawa Health Team - Équipe Santé Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health, the City of Ottawa, Hôpital Montfort and a number of additional community partners.
- This is a community response to an identified need, much like the Taskforce and its partners have been doing for months. This is not a permanent fixed assessment centre.

**The response to COVID is not one-size-fits-all. The needs in disproportionately impacted communities are more than simply testing.**

- Unlike other assessment centres in Ottawa, Vanier's testing site is intended to mobilize supports around high needs residents and underserved communities. This includes communities where many people may live together in one household, take public transit, and go to an in-person job, so cannot keep their children home from school.
- The pandemic has amplified the lack of affordable housing, access to food and more. The response in the Vanier community extends well beyond testing-only to include other social supports including food, housing and health education.

**The response works closely with communities to be effective. Our approach is to engage with communities in a way that builds connections.**

- Communicating through trusted community leaders, school principals, etc.
- Knocking on doors, using paper door hangers, getting the message out through community WhatsApp messages, etc.
- Communicating in several languages.

**Residents who meet the testing criteria and who don't have a car, experience language barriers, or who need additional supports to self-isolate are encouraged to book an appointment by calling 613-288-5353.**

- People wanting to get tested at the Vanier Community Services Centre (Centre Francophone) must use the entrance at 270 Marier Avenue.
- It is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 p.m. until 6 p.m.
- Residents who do not experience similar barriers are encouraged to access Ottawa's other testing sites by booking an appointment on Ottawa Public Health's website.