

Continuity of services and organizational operations while prioritizing health, safety, and well-being in Berks County



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CATEGORY: Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity (ELC)

The Pennsylvania Department of Health collaborated with the Berks County Intermediate Unit to ensure free COVID-19 testing was available to families of school children and the broader Berks County community.

The “What”

The Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) provides programs and services to public school districts, nonpublic schools, and other human service organizations of Berks County, Pennsylvania. BCIU was asked by the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) to host a COVID-19 testing center to ensure free testing was available to families of school children and the broader community. Funding for the testing was made possible through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for the Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) cooperative agreement. The BCIU Leadership and Pandemic Teams, in consultation with the BCIU Board of Directors, agreed to host the center as a park-to-test or a drive-through site.

The BCIU School Community Testing Center was staffed by AMI Expeditionary Health Care through May 2023 and offered point-of-care testing (rapid antigen), polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and distribution of over-the-counter tests.


Key contributors to this project include Dr. Jill M. Hackman, Executive Director, Berks County Intermediate Unit 14.

The “So What”

As a result of the BCIU School Community Testing Center, BCIU and its constituents were able to continue to offer services and maintain organizational operations while focusing on the health, safety, and well-being of employees and those they serve. Through professional collaboration with DOH and AMI Expeditionary Health Care, the Berks County community was afforded unparalleled customer service, patient confidentiality, and access to free COVID-19 testing options with the goal of fostering a healthy community and decreasing the spread of COVID-19. During AMI's operation at BCIU they performed 510 PCR tests, 563 rapid antigen tests, and distributed 5,420 over-the-counter tests.

The “Now What”

While the COVID-19 testing center is no longer in operation, the BCIU team can successfully coordinate logistics and plan for another center in the event a local need arises. The willingness to execute the project and offer this service has expanded BCIU's reach as a valued partner for the eighteen school districts, two career and technology centers, and the greater community served. Additionally, the professional partnership we developed with AMI Expeditionary Health Care has allowed BCIU to continue to prioritize supporting the health and safety needs of Berks County schools and the community.

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