



City of Bowling Green City Council

August 3, 2020

Dear Senators Sherrod Brown, Rob Portman, and Members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation:

We thank you for all of your hard work and sacrifice during this time of national crisis.

We are elected members of the City Council and Administration of Bowling Green, Ohio.

One of the most pressing issue we all face today is to bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control. The pandemic is spreading rapidly because:

1. Recently infected people, who don't know they are infected because they don't have symptoms, can infect other people. Best estimates from the CDC are that 50% of infections are caused by infected persons before they develop symptoms. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/planning-scenarios.html>
2. Current testing methods are expensive and can take days to give results - during this time infected persons continue to spread the disease to others.
3. Many infected persons are never tested, because they never develop serious symptoms.

The good news is that the technology now exists for rapid, inexpensive, at-home, "spit-on-paper," COVID-19 tests ("Rapid tests"). In the coming months, we can manufacture and distribute hundreds of millions of these tests to determine, cheaply and right away, who is infectious and can spread the disease. This will allow us to safely reopen our schools and universities, businesses, factories, and public buildings.

As members of the U.S. Congress, you have the power to make this happen, so we ask you to please:

1. Immediately encourage the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to fast track development, improvement, and licensing and approval of Rapid, Inexpensive Tests for COVID-19.
2. Immediately fund the manufacture and distribution of rapid tests for everyone to use them every day, especially our health workers, school children, students, and teachers.
3. Provide adequate funding to support and protect all infected people and their families during quarantine, with humane living conditions, medical care and salary support, to prevent hardship and spread of the virus to their family members and others in the community.

Important additional Background Information:

- Rapid inexpensive tests that directly detect intact virus particles (so-called "antigen tests") are sufficiently sensitive to detect who is shedding enough virus to infect others.
- Rapid tests can easily be taken at home and results are available in minutes. No blood, laboratory equipment or medical professionals are needed to run the test.
- Those who test positive using rapid tests can immediately self-isolate and stop the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- Rapid tests cost as low as \$1 each, so everyone can test themselves every day before work, school, or

social events.

- The “gold standard” RT-PCR tests are inappropriate for daily screening of large numbers of people to identify people when they are most infectious, because they are too expensive (\$50 to \$100) and slow. They require trained medical professionals and specialized laboratories, so results can be delayed for several days, during which time infected persons can infect others.
- Mass production and distribution of the rapid tests is much cheaper than another shut-down.
- Several companies have already developed rapid tests.
- The low cost and ease-of-use of rapid tests is crucial to protect vulnerable people, who have been hardest hit by the pandemic, including people over 65, disabled or immunocompromised persons, or those without health insurance.

In conclusion, widespread use of rapid tests, combined with adequate support to protect and support infected persons in quarantine, will stop the spread of the virus and allow life to return safely to nearly normal.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this extremely urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Hollenbaugh
President

Sandy Rowlands
At-Large Representative

John Zanfardino
Second Ward Representative

Neocles Leontis
At-Large Representative

Rachel Phipps
Third Ward Representative

P.S. To learn more about the rapid tests and their benefits, please consult the interview with Dr. Michael Mina, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, Harvard University, on the podcast, [This Week in Virology](https://www.microbe.tv/twiv/twiv-640/), episode #640 (specifically minutes 22-33). This podcast was released on July 16, 2020. (<https://www.microbe.tv/twiv/twiv-640/>). Dr. Mina co-authored the op-ed published in the New York Times on July 3, 2020 with economist Laurence Kotliff, Boston University Professor of Economics at), titled [Coronavirus Testing the Cheap, Simple Way](#). The popular weekly podcast, [MedCram - Medical Lectures explained Clearly](#), aired on July 20, 2020, discussed the importance of rapid testing and how these tests work.