STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Lori A. Shibinette
Commissioner

Lori A. Weaver
Deputy Commissioner

August 25, 2020

The Honorable Mary Jane Wallner
The Honorable Lou D'Allesandro
State House
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Representatives:

Thank you for your letter regarding procuring Covid rapid testing machines for all schools in New Hampshire or alternatively, all school districts. The figures below indicate the cost of providing that equipment for rapid school testing.

	Cost for Analyzer	Cost of tests	Total Cost
Quidel Sofia Antigen Test	$2,000	$575*	
650 Individual Schools (annual Costs)	$1.3m	$3.0m**	$4.3m
185 School Districts	$370,000	$1.7m***	$2.07m
* $575 per 25 tests.			
**Assume each school at 200 tests per year			
***Assumes 400 tests per district			

Placement of hundreds of Quidel Sofia Antigen Test in schools would present several obstacles to overcome, including:

- Quidel has stated that they have no availability of this testing equipment until October or November. Then, they may be able to provide us with 20 analyzers. Therefore, acquiring the number of analyzers necessary for a large number of school systems is not a viable option for at least a year.
- The procurement of test kits for rapid machines has historically been the limiting factor. Most likely we would be placed on a monthly supply list that would provide us with far less than needed.
- In order to operate these analyzers, the school or school district would need to hold a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) Certification from the federal government. Most schools do not hold CLIA certification, therefore they would need to either obtain CLIA certification or request a waiver both of which would take several months to complete for all participating schools.
- A nurse or other health professional would be required onsite to administer the test. Several schools do not have full time school nurses.

- A dedicated and specific area would need to be set up within the school to perform specimen collection, to ensure PPE availability and reduce risk of cross contamination of specimens/equipment.
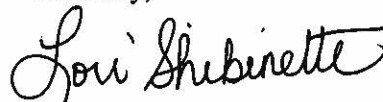
As an alternative, please consider the purchase of 25 Quidel Sofia's for our community testing centers. We have these testing centers in every geographic region in the state. Placement of the Quidel in each testing center would allow for rapid test access to students in an environment with all of the necessary safeguards in place. We expect to be able to access 20 of these machines in November and the remainder in December. The cost breakdown is below:

	Cost for Analyzer	Cost of tests	Total Cost
Quidel Sofia Antigen Test	$2,000	$575*	
650 Individual Schools (annual Costs)	$1.3m	$3.0m**	$4.3m
185 School Districts	$370,000	$1.7m***	$2.07m
25 Community Testing Centers	$50,000	$345,000^	$395,000
* $575 per 25 tests.			
**Assume each school at 200 tests per year			
***Assumes 400 tests per district			
^ Assumes 600 tests per center			

The procurement of the Quidel Sofia Antigen test equipment for community based testing sites would allow for community access to rapid antigen testing for students, teachers and the general community. The vast majority of New Hampshire's community testing centers are located in our local community hospitals or hospital affiliated medical practices. These centers have the appropriate certification, qualified staff and a system to ensure safe and accurate testing. These centers also provide a direct link to the healthcare system, ensuring a seamless transition from test results to patient care. This would be the most effective placement of rapid testing equipment.

Thank you for your inquiry. Please feel free to reach out to me with further questions.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Shibinette
Commissioner