



PRESS RELEASE

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Pioneering San Antonio COVID-19 Lab to Test Thousands of People Per Day to Create COVID-19 Safety Zones

Unprecedented lab capacity allows for rapid testing of asymptomatic “silent spreaders,” the key to re-opening schools and the economy.

(San Antonio, TX – Sept. 17, 2020) [Community Labs](#), a new nonprofit organization, has launched an innovative laboratory in San Antonio, changing how traditional COVID-19 testing is currently conducted by advances in **speed, capacity, accuracy and price, along with a less invasive testing process**. Inspired by the work of [Scientists to Stop COVID-19](#) and the [Broad Institute](#) of MIT and Harvard, Community Labs will start with a capacity of 600 tests a day, scale to 10,000-12,000 tests a day, and have the potential to scale significantly in the near future.

Community Labs is a collaborative effort co-founded by Graham Weston, former CEO and Chairman of Rackspace Hosting, Inc. and Chair of the 80/20 Foundation; J. Bruce Bugg Jr., Chairman and Trustee of The Tobin Endowment; and J. Tullos Wells, Managing Director of The Kronkosky Charitable Foundation. Weston is Chairman of Community Labs, with Bugg and Wells serving as Vice Chairmen.

Through its improved testing program, the new organization will help identify asymptomatic, COVID-19 individuals in a defined “micro-population,” such as schools or the workplace. That will allow non-symptomatic members to safely quarantine, thereby stopping the virus from spreading and allowing for the rest of the population to remain safe. Community Labs will serve the greater San Antonio metro area.

The initial lab is housed and operated by San Antonio nonprofit, [BioBridge Global](#), with critical collaboration from [UT Health San Antonio](#). The Community Labs testing process uses a PCR test — the FDA standard in COVID-19 testing — which meets the **95% confidence level the FDA requires for testing methods** and employs a swab in the front of the nostril. Utilizing innovative supply chain solutions, the price of each test will be materially lower than current market prices, with a goal of scaling the price to less than \$35 per test.

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“Until now, testing for asymptomatic carriers was not available, as testing facilities across the country have focused on symptomatic carriers of COVID-19,” Weston said. “Utilizing the Community Labs testing innovation, businesses and schools can quickly create their own COVID-19 Safety Zones by providing frequent, lower-cost assurance testing of every person in their defined micro-population, with test samples collected on-site and **results available within 24 hours**. This level of testing allows the detection of asymptomatic, silent spreaders currently responsible for infecting up to 50% of new COVID-19 cases.”

The [80|20 Foundation](#), [Kronkosky Charitable Foundation](#) and The [Tobin Endowment](#) have contributed a combined \$2.5 million to kick off the effort.

“We have the opportunity to prove what is possible for a community, a city and eventually the state of Texas and even the nation,” Bugg said. “I am excited to partner with Community Labs and this team so we can get children back in school, people back to work and lead our state in recovering from this pandemic.”

Wells said, “We agreed immediately at the request of Graham Weston to join the 80/20 Foundation and The Tobin Endowment to support this effort, believing it to be one of the most consequential community efforts the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation has ever undertaken. This will have the most immediate impact to gets kids back to school, parents back to work and our community safely back to normal.”

[BioBridge Global](#) has provided critical insight, know-how, infrastructure, and teams with deep experience in high-volume testing as well as experience working with the FDA. BioBridge is the parent entity of the South Texas Blood & Tissue Center and related nonprofit subsidiaries.

“The ability to find asymptomatic carriers in a presumed healthy population is a critical element in the multi-faceted solution that is needed to address this pandemic,” said Dr. Rachel Beddard, Chief Medical Officer of BioBridge Global. “I am pleased that our team was able to develop this level of quality in a test as well as the ability to provide results in 24 hours. This will help identify asymptomatic individuals and move them into quarantine so they can avoid spreading the disease.”

Weston said, “We want to help make San Antonio the safest city in America through our assurance testing strategy. We also hope to inspire other cities to set up their own labs and will freely share our process and lessons learned with those who ask.”

Schools, businesses, and organizations who partner with Community Labs to test their potentially asymptomatic populations should continue to comply with all required safety measures in their buildings and workspaces – wearing masks, sanitizing hands and surfaces, and social distancing.

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Those interested in learning more about Community Labs and how they might implement this strategy in their school or workplace may visit Community-Labs.org or contact info@community-labs.org or 210-866-6935.

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About Community Labs, LLC

Community Labs, LLC identifies asymptomatic silent spreaders of COVID-19 by providing 24-hour test results, scale, accuracy, and a less invasive test by swabbing the front of the nostril. With Community Labs, schools and business can create COVID-19 Safety Zones and a pathway for schools to reopen, people to return to work and communities to recover. Community Labs is a nonprofit organization based in San Antonio, Texas. For more information, visit Community-Labs.org.

About BioBridge Global

BioBridge Global is a San Antonio-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that offers diverse services through its subsidiaries – the South Texas Blood & Tissue Center, QualTex Laboratories, GenCure and The Blood & Tissue Center Foundation. BBG provides products and services in blood resource management, cellular therapy, donated umbilical cord blood and human tissue as well as testing of blood, plasma, and tissue products for clients in the United States and worldwide. BBG is committed to saving and enhancing lives through the healing power of human cells and tissue. It enables advances in the field of regenerative medicine by providing access to human cells and tissue, testing services and bio manufacturing and clinical trials support. Learn more at BioBridgeGlobal.org.

About UT Health and the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

UT Health San Antonio has mobilized to confront the COVID-19 pandemic on all fronts - providing health care workers who screen and care for patients, discovering ways to better test for the virus, and working toward future treatments against it. UT Health Pathology operates a sophisticated reference laboratory for our region (<https://lsom.uthscsa.edu/pathology/reference-labs/>). The UT Pathology Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory developed PCR testing for COVID-19 in March 2020 in collaboration with University Hospital System Laboratories, is currently engaged in several community testing efforts, and is pleased to provide medical and scientific expertise to support this new Community Labs undertaking.