



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

Marylou Sudders, Secretary,
Executive Office of Health & Human Services
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Margret Cooke, Commissioner
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

March 24, 2022

Dear Secretary Sudders and Commissioner Cooke,

Thank you for your response to our request to keep the UMass Amherst community test site open through the end of the semester. Respectfully, we urge your reconsideration of the decision to close the site on March 31.

Please consider these factors:

- **Access** – Your point is well taken that at home test kits are widely available through private retailers and covered by private and public health insurance companies. However, it is our belief that it is the state's responsibility to provide testing resources directly, without the added barrier of health insurance reimbursement or being subject to the supply available at private businesses. In addition, as you well know, western Massachusetts residents face existing transportation barriers to travel to Hampden County. For too many, these barriers make the two state-sponsored Springfield sites inaccessible.
- **Surveillance** – We do not view the supply of rapid tests as a substitute for the PCR testing provided through the UMASS Amherst Stop the Spread site, since rapid tests are not connected to the state's surveillance system. We value the role that community testing plays in identifying outbreaks in our community. Particularly given the potential for increased cases due to the spread of the BA.2 variant, we believe surveillance testing remains important and needs to be supported by state-sponsored PCR testing.
- **Cost** - It is still unclear to us why the state will not commit to keeping this site open for the remainder of the academic year. Can you clarify the metrics or figures you're using that indicate this site as being inefficient from a cost perspective?
- **Limited time** - We request that the site remain open for an additional eight weeks, no later than May 31, to coincide with the end of the academic year.

Thank you again for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

MINDY DOMB, State Representative
3rd Hampshire District

JO COMERFORD, State Senator
Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District