



## Ohio Carpenters' Fringe Benefit Funds

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### **CORONAVIRUS ANTIBODY TESTING FOR ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS**

We are pleased to offer coronavirus antibody testing for you and your eligible dependents (age 5 or older) as part of the Building Trades Welfare Foundation-Mayo Clinic Laboratories COVID-19 Resilience Project (Project). The goals of this Project are:

- To provide participants the greatest amount of information possible to make determinations about their own health and safety in a COVID-19 environment.
- To determine how many individuals, have protective antibodies, how long those antibodies last and, therefore, the presumed protection against the virus.

The goal is to test 50,000 individuals of all ages. This is an enormous and ambitious undertaking, but you and your brothers and sisters are in a unique position to partner with these top researchers due to the very nature of organized labor. This is a unique opportunity to obtain important health information for yourself and to play a part in the solution to this global pandemic.

**WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?** With the development and distribution of vaccines, this Project very well-timed. The long-term effectiveness of the vaccines is still unknown and large portions of the population have indicated they are unwilling to be vaccinated. It is likely a combination of vaccination and direct COVID-19 exposure will be required to achieve population (“herd”) immunity. Thus, a study focusing on whether antibodies last and grow stronger in the general population is of vital importance. More details are provided in the enclosed Brief Project Description and FAQs. We encourage you to read this carefully.

**TESTING:** The test will involve a finger prick (Blood Test Spot) that will be administered with the assistance of phlebotomists. If this test is positive, you will be asked to test again at four-month intervals to check if you are still positive, and thus still presumably have protective antibodies. In addition to providing you important information about your antibody status, this follow-up is key to the study so please be prepared to commit to this follow-up if you are antibody positive.

**NO COST:** The cost of the test will be covered 100% by the Fund for eligible participants and covered family members.

**TESTING DATES AND SITES:** Testing dates and sites, and information as to how to register, will be posted on the IKORCC website at <https://www.ikorcc.com/antibody/>. Please check frequently for testing dates in your area. Due to the coordination of this Project with the Mayo Clinic, **NO WALK-INS WILL BE ALLOWED. You must register.**

**Please do not come to the event if you are sick, displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the prior 14 days.**



**The Building and Construction Trades Welfare Foundation-Mayo Clinic Laboratories  
COVID-19 RESILIENCE PROJECT**

**Participant Summary and Frequently Asked Questions  
February 9, 2021**

*“Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood.  
Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.” Marie Curie*

**Welcome!!**

We are excited to invite you to participate in a study that is intended:

- To determine whether you or your dependents have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the “corona” virus that causes COVID-19, and whether you have developed antibodies. Antibodies are molecules the body produces to, among other things, help fight infection. If your test result is “positive” that means you have probably been exposed to SARS-CoV-2 and are more likely, - although not guaranteed - to have some protection against the virus (at least protection to COVID symptoms or complications). Also, if positive you will be asked to return for repeat testing in four months and be able to see if you still have antibodies. If your test results are negative, you will have the information that you do not have potentially protective antibodies and therefore may choose to be more conscious of following safety protocols.
- To join in a national effort powered by the force of unionized building and construction trade participants working with the world-renowned Mayo Clinic to gather information that will assist in further understanding and containing this virus. The study is designed to provide vital information to medical researchers to help determine the presence and persistence (i.e., if they last and grow stronger) of positive antibodies in the fight against COVID-19. Knowledge is power!

The goal is to test 50,000 individuals of all ages who are eligible participants in certain multiemployer welfare funds. This is an enormous and ambitious undertaking, but you and your brothers and sisters are in a unique position to partner with these top researchers due to the very nature of organized labor. With your support and cooperation, we can get this done and be proud to be part of the solution!

Please read the following Brief Project Description, followed by Frequently Asked Questions.

## BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Initial participants: Building and construction trade eligible participants in multiemployer funds that have chosen to participate in Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, and Indiana.
- Should you agree to participate, you will register for the program on Sign Up Genius and asked to provide basic information. You may also register your eligible spouse and children (at least 5 years of age) should they choose to participate.
- You will then receive an email from the Oracle COVID-19 Patient Monitoring System (Oracle) to register on the Oracle website. After registering, you will receive an email from Oracle confirming your personal information.
- You will also be asked to participate in a brief Oracle daily survey to help determine if you are developing symptoms consistent with COVID-19. This daily survey is optional, but you are strongly encouraged to participate – again, the more information provided to the researchers the better!
- As to testing, depending upon location and availability, you will have the option to either donate a few drops of blood by way of a finger prick, which will be placed on a special card (Blood Spot Test), or to have a blood draw. The Blood Spot Test and the blood draws will be sent to Mayo Clinic Laboratories for analysis to determine if you likely have developed antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. You will receive an email from Oracle when the results are available, approximately 7-10 days after testing.
- If your initial test is negative, you will not have another test. However, even if your initial test is negative, we will request that you continue to report COVID symptoms in response to the daily Oracle email.
- If your initial test is positive, you will be asked to have another blood test in 4 months to see if your protective antibodies have remained stable or declined. The current intention is to continue testing positive participants every 4 months for the first 12 months of the study to help determine if their antibody levels remain stable (i.e., if they continue to maintain presumed protection from the virus).
- **The follow up tests are key to the study, so please be prepared to commit to these follow up tests if you are asked to do so.**
- Your antibody test results will be sent to you via an email from Oracle.
- The researchers at Mayo will use de-identified information for purposes of this Project. De-identified means your privacy is protected. As part of a national effort to combat this virus, de-identified information in the Oracle Patient Monitoring System, including the de-identified information gathered as part of this Project, will be shared with the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to accomplish essential public health goals. According to HHS, entry of patient information into this Oracle system is fully compliant with HIPAA.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is COVID-19 and why is it relevant to me?

- COVID-19 is disease caused by a novel “corona” virus (SARS-CoV-2), thought to have first spread from animals to humans in late 2019, likely in Wuhan China.
- COVID-19 is remarkable for its ease of transmission, and its wide-ranging, harmful effects.
- It is causing the most devastating public health crisis in a century, with over 2 million deaths worldwide and over 400,000 deaths in the U.S., and these numbers are climbing.
- COVID-19 presently accounts for over 10% of American deaths on a daily basis from all causes. It is now the third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer, and on track to become the leading cause of death. Its fatality rate is 10 x higher in individuals with significant pre-existing health issues, such as diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, hypertension, and cancer.
- It is true that most survive and recover fully from COVID-19, but there are survivors who are being called “long-haulers” whose symptoms persist. Further, the virus can damage the lungs, heart, and brain leading to other health concerns long-term.
- Young patients represent the fastest growing segment of infected individuals.

### 2. Are there effective treatments for COVID-19?

Overall care has been improved for patients with COVID-19, and the chance of dying from this disease on an individual basis has slowly declined over time. Medical therapies include genetically engineered antiviral drugs, genetically engineered antibodies, steroids, and “convalescent plasma” (i.e., plasma taken from patients who have contracted COVID-19 and survived). However, although aggressive combination therapy has somewhat reduced the risk of dying from COVID-19 (studies vary in how much this risk has declined), *there remains no known cure for this disease*, and it is unlikely that widely effective therapies will be available in foreseeable future.

### 3. Vaccines are being rolled out, so why should I get tested for antibodies? Doesn't that mean the disease will go away soon?

Tremendous progress has been made with respect to the development of vaccines and distribution, although not as quick and efficient as everyone would like, is underway. Note, however:

- Vaccine “effectiveness” specifically means that the drug has been shown to reduce the symptoms of COVID-19. To date, *no vaccine has yet been definitively shown to either prevent infection with SARS-CoV-2 or to prevent transmission of the virus*. Furthermore, we really have very little information about how long any of the new vaccines continue to be effective after initial immunization.
- Significant hurdles exist with respect to shipping, distribution, and administration of a vaccine to over 300 million Americans. Furthermore, *over 40 percent of Americans have stated that if even if a vaccine were available to them at no cost, they would not get such a vaccine*.
- It is likely that a combination of vaccination and direct COVID exposure will be required for us to ultimately achieve population (“herd”) immunity to the virus.
- **Thus, a study focusing on the presence and persistence of antibodies in the general population, i.e., if the antibodies last and grow stronger, is of vital importance.**
- On an individual level, your testing will provide you with important health information as to whether you may have potentially protective antibodies.

### 4. If I have had the COVID vaccine, can I still participate?

Yes, we encourage you to participate if you have already had the COVID-19 vaccine. Participating will allow us you, and the researchers, to see if your body has formed antibodies after you have received the vaccine.

**5. If I choose to participate, will my results be kept confidential?**

All individual data that will be used for analyses will be kept strictly confidential. Oracle has developed a collaborative relationship with the CDC to help monitor COVID-19 symptoms around the country. Your symptom data will be shared with groups such as the CDC and HHS, but only in de-identified form - which is to say, without any of your personal information. None of your test results will be made available to any outside agency, and the researchers will only develop analyses that have been “scrubbed” of individually identifiable data.

**6. How will my test results be provided to me?**

You will receive an email from Oracle when the results are available, approximately 7-10 days after testing.

**7. If I do not want to receive the Oracle daily emails or participate in providing information regarding my health status on a regular basis, will I still be notified of test results?**

We strongly encourage all participants to interact with the program through the Oracle daily emails. This is not only the most efficient way to communicate and track symptoms, but it is also the best way for participants to receive important information about COVID related updates or new possible opportunities (such as the ability to have antibody testing when they do ultimately receive a vaccine). That stated, if a participant chooses to opt out of the daily updates, they will still be notified of their test results.

**8. Why are individuals with positive antibody tests being asked to have repeat blood draws several months later?**

Whether COVID protective antibodies persist, and specifically how long they linger in the body, is poorly understood. In order for us as individuals and a society to prepare adequate protections for this disease, it is essential that we know how long such antibodies persists, and whether their persistence is dependent on factors such as age or medical history. Repeat testing is essential to obtain this information.

**9. What can I do to help prevent developing COVID-19?**

Masks, social distancing, hand washing, symptom tracking, contact tracing, isolation of positives and associated methods have all been shown to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Of these, masks and social distancing are of paramount importance.

**This is a summary of information provided for informational purposes. It is not intended to be specific medical advice. Additional information will be posted on the registration site.**