

Testing patients for COVID-19 is the golden ticket to understanding the true number cases in any given community. That's why Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana joined forces with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to leverage their combined expertise to expand testing capacity.

"What we want to know: Is there more of this virus out there than we know of?" said Robert Healy, MD, Carle's chief medical quality officer.

Fourteen days is a long time for anxious patients to wait for test results for the highly contagious disease—but that was the norm at first. Together, the laboratory teams at Carle and U of I cut patients' wait time to 24-48 hours by:

- Repurposing equipment
- Partnering with state agencies to acquire supplies and personnel
- Mobilizing additional testing machines and materials

"It's so amazing to see everybody team up and try to get something done that's impactful," said Marty Burke, U of I chemistry professor and associate dean for research at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine.

With nasopharyngeal swabs needed to test for COVID-19, the Carle Diagnostic Labs team designed a new prototype, which, if approved, could help address shortages and ramp up testing in Illinois. The organizations also collaborated on a new emergency ventilator solution: The Illinois RapidVent.

Burke praised the partnership as a tremendous team effort: "This is just how we roll."

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