



# LASSEN COUNTY

## Health and Social Services Department

- HSS Administration**
- Public Guardian**  
336 Alexander Avenue  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8128
- Grant and Loans Division**  
1445 Paul Bunyan Road  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8309
- Behavioral Health**  
555 Hospital Lane  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8108/8112
- Chestnut Annex**  
1400-A & B Chestnut Street  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8112
- Patients' Rights Advocate**  
1445 Paul Bunyan Road  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8322
- Public Health**  
1445 Paul Bunyan Road  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8183
- Environmental Health**  
1445 Paul Bunyan Road  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8183
- Community Social Services**  
336 Alexander Avenue  
Susanville, CA 96130
- LassenWORKS  
Business & Career Network**  
PO Box 1359  
1616 Chestnut Street  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8152
- Child & Family Services**  
1600 Chestnut Street  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8277
- Adult Services**  
PO Box 429  
1445 Paul Bunyan Road  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 251-8158
- HSS Fiscal**  
PO Box 1180  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530)251-2614

February 22, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Effective March 1, 2021, the Lassen County Public Health Department located at 1445 Paul Bunyan Road, Susanville California, is no longer available to OptumServe for community-based testing. While a difficult decision, it is in our best interest to properly serve and protect Lassen County residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our initial concerns with having a California centralized testing solution have not only proven to be true but is turning out to be worse than what we had originally thought. The fact that the Governor's office, California Department of Health leadership, OptumServe, and the commissioned Testing Task Force have demonstrated no interest in resolving our issues is unconscionable (Attachment A).

As typical of rural counties, we have been able to resolve the problem on our own and as such, we were able to secure a COVID-19 testing solution at no cost to the state or our community members. Such services will not only provide the surveillance data needed to contain the COVID-19 virus locally but will preserve California taxpayer funds as well.

We considered the following events in making our decision:

- OptumServe does not follow CDC or CDPH COVID-19 guidelines on limiting the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Guidelines urge individuals to stay at home if they are sick or display symptoms consistent with COVID-19. On February 17, 2021, OptumServe staff were heard throughout the Public Health building coughing violently. Several of our staff expressed concerns about the excessive coughing and possible illness transmission. OptumServe staff are exposed to the COVID-19 virus on a daily basis and yet travel from county to county without proper quarantine measures. The PPE they wear is insufficient when they are mixing with our staff and the public in a building for over 12 hours in one day, particularly when they send sick people to our office. This mixing of staff places Lassen County Public Health staff and individuals coming to the clinic for testing at an increased risk of exposure, particularly to foreign COVID-19 variants.

- OptumServe has proven that they are not reliable to show up when scheduled nor provide appropriate advanced notice of their cancellation to the Lassen County Public Health or the public who have scheduled appointments.
- The OptumServe service model ignores the health equity needs of Lassen County by only testing in one location one day per week.
- OptumServe will not share the schedule of testing appointments with Lassen County Public Health. This makes it difficult to know how many people to expect onsite and who may need contact tracing follow up.
- OptumServe testing numbers are beyond disappointing. The following estimated numbers represent testing for each twelve-hour clinic:
  - January 20 – 78 test specimens
  - January 27 – 0 test specimens
  - February 3 – 66 test specimens
  - February 10 – 32 test specimens
  - February 17 – 24 test specimens

Lassen County Public Health tests over 100 people during a three-hour testing clinic.

- OptumServe does not complete courier transport paperwork putting into question test sample accuracy. The attached courier slip includes all information except the number of samples they are transporting. Having blank fields on such an important tracking document opens the door to fraud and misrepresentation of actual tests being transferred to the central lab. (Attachment B)
- OptumServe sends negative test results via costly next day delivery (FedEx). This puts into question why they are not using efficient and effective communication methods such as phone, text, and/or email.
- While the State of California, under Governor Newsom's leadership has implemented punitive measure of accountability to county public health departments and the public at large, no accountability measures are in place for the costly, ineffective OptumServe services in Lassen County.

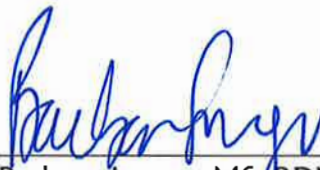
Therefore, the citizens of Lassen County deserve better and we have taken the course of action needed to protect our communities, including the disparate areas of our county.

We are available to offer consultation to OptumServe in their search for a new location.

Respectfully,



Kenneth Korver, MD  
Public Health Officer



Barbara Longo, MS, RDN  
Director, Health & Social Services

## ATTACHMENT A

**From:** Chavez, Gil@CDPH <Gil.Chavez@cdph.ca.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 3, 2021 5:12 PM

**To:** Gibbons, Michelle@cheac.org <mgibbons@cheac.org>; DeBurgh, Kat@calhealthofficers.org <deburgh@calhealthofficers.org>; Barbara Longo <BLongo@co.lassen.ca.us>

**Cc:** Jacobson, Kathleen@CDPH <Kathleen.Jacobson@cdph.ca.gov>; Mijic, Marko@CHHS <Marko.Mijic@chhs.ca.gov>; Ghaly, Mark (CHHS) <Mark.Ghaly@chhs.ca.gov>; Badley, Ellen@CDPH <Ellen.Badley@cdph.ca.gov>; Picinich, Nick@DHCS <Nick.Picinich@dhcs.ca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: COVID-19 testing in Lassen Co

This message comes from an external sender. EXTERNAL SENDER WARNING!

Dear Michelle, thank you for the heads up and constructive ideas. Providing services in a large and diverse state like our presents regular challenges. Weather related challenges add a lot of complexity whether it is the fires in the summer or snow in the winter. We strive to learn from our experiences and improve service delivery.

TTF received communication from both the Local Area Coordinator and the Regional Disaster Medical Health Coordinator Region III reporting similar concerns. TTF staff hosted a meeting on Monday with Lassen, Modoc and Sierra counties to discuss concerns surrounding staffing, scheduling and shipping materials.

Thank you for providing potential solutions. These recommendations have been shared with the OptumServe team and responses are provided to your bulleted list below in green.

- **Provide testing kits on-site (200 at a minimum):**  
*All Local Health Jurisdictions have been provided the opportunity to execute an MOU to access testing kits from Color for processing at the Valencia Branch Lab. However, the OptumServe model requires the use of their contracted staff who are trained on the use of their system.*
- **Provide access to the list of scheduled appointments and the associated lab slips:**  
*OptumServe has advised us that this is not a possibility.*
- **Require Optum Serve to reschedule for another day that week, weather permitting.**  
*This was not discussed during the meeting and we will raise this alternative. For context, OptumServe appointments are typically opened on each Tuesday for the following week, OptumServe needs lead time to work with the staffing company to schedule staff and open appointments for another day.*

After coordination with OptumServe lead project manager, OptumServe confirmed all three counties have appts available and staffing is scheduled for this week. Additionally, they flew an EOA RN for Lassen (last night) to ensure the site is functioning properly.

Finally, TTF will be following up with all counties to reiterate the process for escalating issues to OptumServe and TTF when problems arise.

California Governor's Testing Task Force  
Coronavirus Pandemic Response  
Gil F. Chavez, MD, MPH, -- Co-Chair

ATTACHMENT B

Separate and retain bottom portion for Optum.

DATE: 11/20/21

GE ID 83461	#
Date of Sample Collection	11/20/21
Site Address (Enter event location address)	1445 Paul Bunyan Rd Suite B Susanville, California 96130
Site Point of Contact	OptumServe 888-634-1130
Total Number of Samples	
Test Name	Covid-19 Diagnostic
Laboratory	Attn: CDPH Branch Laboratory 28454 Livingston Ave Valencia, CA 91355



Courier Name