



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

October 25, 2021

Alison Beam, Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Health
8th Floor, Health and Welfare Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

*** HAND DELIVERED ***

Dear Secretary Beam:

We write with regard to the State Public Health Lab, which is located in Chester County and operated by the Department of Health's ("DOH's") Bureau of Laboratories.

As you are aware, Act 70 of 2020 requires regular reporting on Pennsylvania's COVID-19 testing efforts. We sincerely appreciate the department's compliance with this law. These reports help us track the efforts of DOH in meeting the Commonwealth's testing needs.

Now that Pennsylvania has achieved a milestone in vaccination rates (over 70% fully vaccinated), which you and the Governor indicated was a statewide goal to alleviate state-ordered mitigation efforts, we must be prepared to advance efforts relating to testing and treatment for both the unvaccinated and those with "breakthrough" COVID-19 cases.

With the continued importance of COVID-19 testing in mind, we note that according to the Act 70 DOH testing reports, testing efforts appear to have been hampered for over a year. The reports consistently state, "The State Laboratory is currently a limiting factor."

We must do better. The COVID-19 pandemic has been ongoing since January 2020, and testing should not be a limiting factor at this point.

There is no rational basis for DOH's laboratory to be an impediment in any way to the timely receipt, processing, and reporting of COVID-19 test results for Pennsylvania citizens.

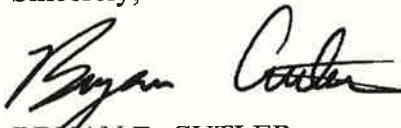
Our ability to manage through the remainder of the pandemic and meeting the testing and treatment needs of our citizens is directly related to the functional capacity and delivery of professional services by DOH's laboratory.

As such, we are requesting, at the earliest practical time, to visit and tour the state laboratory and have a direct discussion with you concerning the challenges that DOH is experiencing so that we can advance legislation or commit resources to resolve the deficiencies and improve patient outcomes.

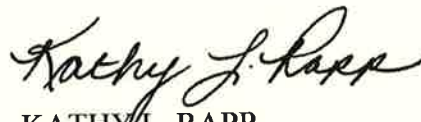
We owe it to the people of Pennsylvania to ensure that any ongoing bottlenecks, lack of space, or anything else standing in the way of maximum throughput at the state laboratory is promptly addressed.

Please contact us in the next few days to make arrangements for a visit to the state laboratory.

Sincerely,



BRYAN D. CUTLER
The Speaker
100th House District



KATHY L. RAPP
Chair, Committee on Health
65th House District



JOHN LAWRENCE
13th House District

/jgs