

COVID-19 SCREENING



WHAT IS COVID-19 SCREENING?

*Most of the current SARS-Cov2 testing in Montana is focused on **diagnostic testing** intended to determine whether a symptomatic individual is infected with SARS-Cov2 or not, with a high degree of confidence (so that they can be diagnosed and treated).*

Screening for COVID-19 is done with asymptomatic individuals for purposes of making decisions that can help control infections and protect entire communities.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF SCREENING STRATEGIES?

- It is currently estimated at approximately 40% of those infected with SARS-CoV2 are asymptomatic. Despite not having symptoms, they can unknowingly infect others.
- **Imagine you are fishing:** A screening strategy provides a large fishing net that attempts to “catch” as many of these positive asymptomatic people as possible and isolate them before they infect others.
- By doing so, we can **break the chain of infection more frequently**. This way it is easier to control the spread of the virus so that we can **better protect those who are vulnerable** to severe illness and decrease the strain on our rural health care systems while keeping our economy and schools open.

HOW COULD LAMP SCREENING BE USED? WHAT DECISIONS MIGHT IT INFORM?

- Screening could be used to **test everyone in long-term care facilities, students returning or living on campus, or in tribal communities.**
- Screening could **inform decisions about whether students can return to campus safely, whether travel to particular communities is safe, or whether visitors can be safe for assisted-living facilities.**

Screening can also be employed to **monitor the prevalence of infection within communities** and to prevent outbreaks that may overwhelm quarantine facilities, or healthcare capacity.





HOW CAN LAMP SALIVA TESTING ALLOW US TO DO BROADER SCREENING FOR COVID-19?

- LAMP testing is ***much less expensive*** because it does not require as many resources, equipment, or personnel with technical expertise.
- LAMP testing is also ***much faster*** than other tests (results in approximately 45 minutes).
- This will allow us to ***significantly catch more positive cases*** in a faster and more cost-effective way.



IS SCREENING RELIABLE? WHAT ABOUT FALSE NEGATIVES?

- While PCR testing is widely considered the “gold standard” for diagnostic testing, LAMP still has a ***very high sensitivity and specificity that will be able to catch many positives.***
- While fishing nets will also fail to catch some fish, ***you will catch a lot more than if you do not have a net at all.***