

“Managing COVID-19 in effective ways and preventing unnecessary deaths will be dependent on numerous scientifically informed actions. This includes testing both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals for active COVID-19 disease through PCR testing and conducting ethically designed contact tracing of those who are infected as a means of further controlling spread and understanding infection pathways. In addition another key tool in the arsenal will be antibody testing, once a reliable gold standard is established, which will provide us with a better sense of the extent to which the virus has infected the population, delineate the extent to which infection is associated with no symptoms, and allow us to follow people over time to determine if antibodies confer protection. These public health tools, which may be enacted through a collaboration of governments, departments of health and the academy, as we are demonstrating in New Jersey, are crucial in ensuring the health of individual people, populations and the economy”

Dean Perry N. Halkitis – Rutgers University School of Public Health

“All recommendations agree that the cornerstone for not only bending the curve, but bringing the virus to heel, is widely available intensive testing and the ability to trace and quarantine. Currently we need to do 3 times the numbers of tests per day and increase our public health workforce by many times that. If we do not commit these resources, we will be doomed to a cycle of shut down, re-opening, resurgence of the virus and then shutting down again.”

Dean Laura A. Siminoff – Temple University College of Public Health

“We now find ourselves in a situation where we have been staying at home where possible, driven by an inadequate public health infrastructure compounded by a negligent administration, coupled with rising pressure from certain segments of the population to get back to work. The COVID-19 outbreak and the crippled economy are both public health problems of substantial magnitude. As states begin relaxing stay-at-home directives prematurely by every metric we know, the transition to more targeted distancing requiring ample case tracking, contact tracing and testing becomes more imperative. We anticipate more peaks, driven by experience with viruses. But there is no question that there will be a follow-on uptick in cases and fatalities if we don’t aggressively manage this transition to the tracking, tracing, testing paradigm as we gradually move to reopen the economy.”

Dean Craig H. Blakely – University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences

“We will be unable to fully open the country or even parts of the country until we have adequate testing for COVID-19 as well as robust contact tracing. This will require sufficient funding as well as coordination between federal, state, and local authorities. There have already been a number of countries that have used these methods to improve monitoring and to reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is time we join them and fully fund needed testing and contact tracing across the United States.”

Donna K. Arnett – University of Kentucky College of Public Health